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THE CHICAGO LEDGER

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THE GIRL WHO DANCED WITH WASHINGTON

Sweet maiden of the hazel eyes,
In flowered silk and powdered hair;
Pray tell us what your thoughts may be,
Seated in your high-back chair!

Your dreamy gaze is far away,
Beyond the setting of the sun;
And in your vision fair you see
The girl who danced with Washington!

You dream sweet dreams of him who fought
On battlefield 'mid bullet's fret;
And when the glorious cause was won,
Came home to dance the minuet!

You envy her of long ago,
Who everlasting honor won;
The girl who with the powdered hair,
Stepped forth to dance with Washington!

Dream on, sweet maid, with hazel eyes,
That look beyond the setting sun;
Thou'rt sweeter far than she of old—
The girl who danced with Washington!

The Golden Spider;

Or, THE WOMAN IN BLACK

By Major Albion F. Grant

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CHAPTER IX.

IN HIS GOLDEN WEB.

IN THE early hours of the morning a man stumbled through the heavy fog.

His almost fell up the steps of Sam Barlow's house, and managed to get inside. In the library he dropped half dead into a chair and groaned. His face was white and drawn, his garments almost tatters, and blood on his hands.

It was Gammer Sludge.

"Out of the lion's den!" he cried. "Out of the hands of that cursed woman. Did I kill her, or did she kill me? I feel her hands at my throat yet, and terrible hands they were. I dared not go upstairs to find the door I saw in old Carlo's crystal globe. Old Sam is in that room, but I dared not look. I'm lucky to have life in my body, but I'll fathom the mystery of that chamber yet."

He rose with difficulty and opened the sideboard, from which he took a bottle of wine. He filled a glass twice and gulped its contents down like a man almost exhausted.

"What have they done with him?" he exclaimed, going back to the chair. "He's dead by this time. I know he is. And in that house! It's her house, too. I knew it the moment I saw the image in the golden ball. Why not summon the police and have them investigate? No, no, I can't do that!"

He shuddered at the thought of calling in the authorities. It would never do. He had secrets, and, then, he feared the police.

When the wine had taken effect and steadied his shattered nerves, he tottered forward and looked at himself in the oval mirror, which had more than once reflected the features of the missing millionaire. What a spectacle he presented. It was a picture fit for the gods.

"I look like a tramp," he said aloud. "I told the girl I was Tony Watch-the-Clock, but she didn't believe it. Mrs. Poman knows who Tony is, and I thought that name would prove the open sesame to the room upstairs, but it didn't. I can't play that game again. Once attempted in that house, the game's up. How did I get home, anyhow? That's the puzzle, but I'm here and alive. When I broke loose from the talons of that she-eagle who keeps the portals of the house in Soho Place I thought only of getting out."

Then he laughed at the reflection in the mirror and returned to the bottle.

"He's not back yet," he went on. "How could he come when he was tied in a chair at the globe told me? And the woman in black—the accursed creature who came here twice—once when the master was here and again when I found her on the floor in a faint? I've got to do something or I'll go mad."

He changed his tattered clothes for better ones and washed the blood from his hands.

"I wonder where the young man is?" he mused. "He went away when I refused to pay anything about Madam Leone. Perhaps I'd better tell him what I know, but I can't—not yet."

The morning advanced and old Gammer was still half-dazed in the house in Hampton Court.

"Maybe I'd better go down to the office. I've been past it, but haven't looked in since old Sam went away."

He made himself as presentable as possible and slipped out of the house.

Twenty minutes later he might have been seen hovering around the building where Sam Barlow dealt in millions and raked in the shining gold and crisp banknotes from his games.

What did he see?

Breath nearly left his body as he looked and he could not believe the evidence of his green eyes.

There sat his master, the Golden Spider, at his desk.

Old Gammer pinched himself and wondered if he was really awake.

There was no mistake. Old Sam had returned. He was at his desk, his figure leaning forward and white head and face visible from the pave.

At last Gammer Sludge staggered up the steps and opened the outer door. Even there he halted to catch his breath and to look again.

He reached the inner door at last and lifted the latch.

In he went, to pause within three feet of the Golden Spider, who, absorbed at the old-fashioned desk, did not see him.

"Master Sam," said the old man in a whisper, "I've found you at last!"

Slowly the man at the desk turned his head and looked Gammer Sludge from head to foot. Then, with the coolest deliberation, he resumed his occupation.

Mr. Sludge waited a few moments and made a little shuffling noise.

"What is it?" asked Sam Barlow.

He had nearly fell from Gammer's hands.

"I'm glad you're back, I—I——"

"Well, what brings you down here?" interrupted the Spider. "Your place is at the house."

"I know, master Sam, but——"

"Go back at once!"

"What did it all mean?" cried old Sludge. "I've been distracted. If I hadn't come here I'd have gone as mad as a March hare. Have I had me in the incurable ward before this."

"With the rest of the fools, eh?"

"Maybe I belong in that catalog," answered Gammer with a sickly smile. "But I've been to Soho Place."

"You have? When?"

"Last night. I fell into the hands of the Philistines. How did you escape from the chair?"

A strange look came into old Sam's eyes.

"Well, I'm here and in the flesh," he said with a little chuckle. "What's so strange about all this? I'm busy now."

Old Sludge did not stir.

"I've got business of importance on my hands," continued the Golden Spider. "It's a big deal and there's half a million in it."

This was as good as a dismissal. Sludge was keen enough to understand this, but the mystery of Sam Barlow's disappearance overwhelmed everything.

"Go home!" commanded Sam. "You're used to obeying me."

"I've done that for thirty years."

An imperious wave of the hand followed Gammer's words, but yet he lingered.

"Master," said he, venturing, "may I ask if they brought you to terms?"

"To what terms?"

"Why, what they demanded." Old Gammer was thinking of the mysterious letter, which said: "No millions or exposure."

Sam Barlow looked up with a look at Barlow's countenance. "I must have been dreaming!" said he.

"Then you must have dreamed."

"You will be home after awhile?"

"Perhaps not."

Old Sludge withdrew.

He left the office as he shuffled down to the pave. "What did they do to him in Soho Place?" he asked. "I'll have to watch him of something. I can't just make out of what. He's not the same Barlow I've known for these many years. He's not the old man of his life wheel. It's a mystery that balks me."

He did not realize that he was hungry till he had gone a few blocks, when his nature asserted itself and he dropped into the first cafe he found.

Here he consulted his meager purse and ordered accordingly. As he fell to, he heard a familiar voice behind him, looking up, he found himself confronted by Cecil Taine, who had taken the opposite chair.

Old Sludge gagged and turned white.

"Well, Mr. Sludge," said the young man, "you look like a hyena caught in a trap."

"It's the first time in my life," responded Gammer with a forced smile. "But he's back."

"Who is back?"

"Master Sam—Sam Barlow of Hampton Court. I've just seen him."

"Oh! Look here, Mr. Sludge, will you answer my question now?"

Gammer started.

"The one about——"

"The one about——The one about the woman in Soho Place."

"I can't, sir. It's my secret," exclaimed Sludge.

"Very well," said Cecil. "I shan't press it. You've scratched your hands."

Mr. Sludge glanced at his hands and smiled faintly.

"I ran across a paper of pins," he said, lying coolly.

"Looks to me like you've had a tussle with an eagle."

"Maybe I've had."

"Our lady in black is still alive, Mr. Sludge."

The knife nearly dropped from Gammer's hand.

"She tried to kill a friend of mine last night. I got there in the nick of time. I found Miss Gray on the floor unconscious. Another minute and I would have been too late. It was a close call. I've about come that smoked death. What do you think of that, Mr. Sludge?"

"I think we're all doomed—old Sam, you and I. Is she going away?"

Cecil's hand darted across the table and seized Gammer's arm.

"Not until you've told me about the woman in Soho Place," he said, flashing his gaze into the face of his master's servant. "The secret lies in your bosom."

CHAPTER X.

COOL RECEPTIONS.

Cecil Taine was not satisfied concerning the curt dismissal of Sybil from Gunner's extensive establishment. He resolved that Joncourt, the manager, should explain, and his visit to Madam Poman's house had only accentuated that feeling.

Leaving Gammer Sludge at his meal, which he had directed be carried to the store, Cecil went to a place that employed hundreds of young girls on meager wages while the proprietor made a great show and cared little for the lives they were sacrificing to the Moloch of the Golden of fat.

He knew that he would find Mr. Joncourt in, and, eager to confront this important personage, he entered the establishment and asked for the manager.

When he was shown to Mr. Joncourt's private room, he came face to face with a pompous individual with mutton-chop whiskers, sandy hair and an air of supreme importance. The manager of Gunner's looked Cecil over and made up his mind that he was an applicant for some not his precious time without remuneration to the firm.

"What is it, sir?" asked the manager. Cecil smothered his real feelings and compromised for decency's sake.

"I have called, Mr. Joncourt," said he, "in the interest of Miss Sybil Gray."

"We are full up," snapped the manager, biting off his words. "We will have to dismiss some of the force owing to the dull times."

"But I don't call to find employment for the young lady."

"Then I can't discuss matters with you."

"The person in whom I am interested has been in your employ——"

"And wants back, eh?"

"No, sir," said Cecil firmly. "It is the last thing she does want. I simply want to know why she was dismissed."

"Oh!"

She received her conge without a word of explanation."

"Doubtless she deserved it. We can't open cases that have been passed upon by the house."

"At least, sir, you can explain——"

"Gunner's never explains. We make no mistakes here."

Cecil bit his lip with vexation.

"Then, sir, you commit flagrant faults and let the victims suffer in silence."

The whiskered individual turned from Cecil and addressed a young man at the desk.

"Go on with the invoice, Ben," said he, totally ignoring his visitor.

"You shall explain!" exclaimed Cecil. "I am the young lady's friend, and the injustice done her shall be righted."

"I have told you that we rectify no errors here, assuming for argument's sake that the firm has erred concerning minor affairs. The young woman got her pay envelope!"

"Yes, sir, but——"

"The incident is closed, then. We are busy this morning, an invoice from India."

"I care not if it is an invoice from paradise," said Cecil, angrily. "A great wrong has been done a friend of mine."

"What's her name?"

"Sybil Gray."

"Daniel, look up the register and see when the girl named Sybil Gray left the house."

A dudish young clerk pulled down a ponderous book and began to turn its pages.

"May the fourth," said he.

"Paid in full, wasn't she?" said Joncourt.

"Yes, sir."

"That doesn't enter into the case," cried Cecil. "We'll admit that Miss Gray was paid in full. But why was she dismissed?"

"We can't discuss that matter. It doesn't concern us at all."

"Read on, young me," was the reply.

"And Miss What's-her-name, doubtless," said Joncourt, at which the clerks tittered.

Cecil could hardly keep his head.

"I was not aware," said he, "that you dismiss employees before they are not viewed with favor by certain customers."

A flush passed over Joncourt's face and mounted to his temples.

"You must not insinuate!" he exclaimed. "Remember that Gunner's has a reputation known the world over, that we import more goods than any five firms in London——"

"I care not if you import all the wealth of Golconda! It does not excuse your treatment of Miss Sybil Gray."

"I cannot go further," was the retort. "Time is money with us," and the manager coolly turned away.

Cecil stood for a moment crimson to the temples. He looked the manager over from head to foot, wondering if he should not take him in hand and lay his fist across the mutton-chop whiskers, teaching him a needed lesson in civility.

"You have dismissed my friend without a word of explanation. You even refused her a recommend.' It was brutal, to say the least."

Joncourt turned upon Cecil, and, with a glance, laid his hand on a blue cord, which dangled over his private desk.

"I shall call the police if we are further molested!" he exclaimed. "We have nothing to do with cases that have passed through our hands. We cannot be disturbed in this manner——"

"You absolutely refuse, then; will explain nothing?"

"We break no established rules at Gunner's."

"Will you deny that Miss Gray was dismissed because she was objectionable to Madam Poman of Soho Place?"

"Sir!"

"You certainly heard me," cried Cecil. "You will not deny that the hand of Madam Poman was in the dismissal of the young lady?"

"I object to the name of one of our best customers being dragged into the case of a——"

"It is true, then. Gunner's is subservient to the commands of the fine butterflies who rule London society, and who have sometimes more wealth than brains."

"This is intolerable!" cried the manager. "You insult Madam Poman."

A little laugh of scorn escaped over Cecil's lips, and he backed toward the door.

"What is your name, sir?" demanded Mr. Joncourt.

"Cecil Taine, Number 38A Burgess Walk."

He broke down that address. Some

With this he opened the door and stepped out.

"Look here," cried the voice of the manager, "Gunner's takes no advice from outside and irresponsible parties."

Cecil thought for a moment of retorting in kind, but kept his head and let the irate manager fume within his little den.

As the young man stepped out into the main apartment with its hundreds of pretty clerks all dressed alike with clean white aprons, he thought, of Sybil and the treatment she had received from the great house.

He was going down one of the wide stairs when he nearly collided with a flashily-dressed woman, who gave him a quick but searching look.

It was no less a personage than Madam Poman.

That she recognized him Cecil knew, for color sprang to her face, blotting out the powder that covered it, and her lips seemed about to speak.

"The cause of it all!" thought the young man as he looked into the eyes he had last encountered in the house in Soho Place. "Here is the serpent in the grass."

"Pardon me, madam," said Cecil, as he laid one hand on the lady's silken sleeve, "you seem to know me. I am Cecil Talbe."

Mrs. Poman came to a halt and threw back her head while she, for an instant, regarded Cecil like one regards some monstrosity in a museum.

One of her jeweled hands adjusted her gold-rimmed glasses as if to assist her study; then she said, in a cold voice which he remembered so well:

"You certainly address me as a stranger. I have no recollection of ever having encountered you before."

"Madam, Your memory is at fault. I have recently interviewed you in behalf of Miss Gray, discontinued upon the demand from this very establishment."

"Tommyrot, sir. Impertinent!" exclaimed the woman, descending to the slang of the street, "it is preposterous. You do not revolve in our circle."

"And I thank Heaven I do not!" broke in Cecil. "I don't meet Ikey Poman. The lane shall turn one of these days, or I'm not Cecil Talbe!" and with this he turned away, leaving the woman glaring at him and sputtering in her subdued fury.

CHAPTER XI.

A COOL PROCEEDING.

The Golden Spider had returned.

Old Jake had not encountered a ghost in the little office, but his master in flesh and blood.

Where he had been and through what adventures he had passed, he did not reveal.

If he had been tied to a chair, as the mystic globe had told, it was his secret and his alone.

It was night when he once more trod the floors of the house, in Hampton Court and entered the library. Mr. Sludge did not meet him at the door, but a solitary figure at the end of the room watched the old man as he slouched forward and shut the door behind him.

The house was still. Within the library all was silent and old Sam was alone.

The Golden Spider had scarcely settled himself in his chair when the bell rang, and the figure on the landing stepped down and opened the portal.

Mr. Sludge greeted a man on the step who had a hat pulled halfway over his eyes, and with his native keenness he tried to catch a view of the face beneath the hat.

"Mr. Barlow?" said the visitor.

"At home, sir. This way, please."

Gammer was followed to the library, and when the old servant opened the door, he glided in.

Old Barlow was at the table in the middle of the room.

He turned a little pale until the man had taken off his hat and revealed the features of a person of forty and not unhandsome.

"Mr. Jonicourt," said Barlow. "I did not expect you."

"One cannot always expect to be looked for," smiled the manager of Gunner's establishment.

"No."

The Golden Spider leaned back in his chair and waited for Joncourt to proceed.

"I've called for a little accommodation," he said. "At times, you know, one finds himself short and must resort to his friends."

"What is it, Mr. Joncourt?"

Joncourt became affable and leaned across the table while he rubbed his hands expectantly.

"I would like to have, say, ten thousand," he went on. "It is to meet an obligation which has been pressing me for some time and I want to get rid of the trouble. Yes, sir, the amount I have stated will tide me over nicely."

The lips of the Golden Spider shut hard.

"You know?" said he, "that I never advance money without approved security."

"I understand," was the reply, "I think I can satisfy you."

With this the manager fumbled in an inside pocket and drew forth a bit of paper somewhat crumpled. This he pressed out with eager hands and passed it toward Sam Barlow. The old man took it up and, after a glance, fixed his gaze upon his visitor.

"I'm sorry," said he, "but I cannot take this."

"You mean you will not?"

"If you want the truth, I will not."

The paper fell from the manager's hands and was pushed across the cloth.

"Do I understand you?" he asked, "you should be the last man to play that sort of game."

There was no reply. Old Barlow was watching his caller like a hawk, and the veins in his forehead were filling with blood.

Joncourt made a motion as if he would leave at once, but the voice of the money shark instantly checked him.

"Don't move," he said in stern tones. "Keep your seat, Tony Joncourt."

Gunner's head man sank back among the cushions and glared at the man of millions.

"In the first place, Mr. Joncourt," pursued old Sam, "don't deal in such small amounts. Why didn't you ask for half a million?"

"I don't need it."

"Oh," sarcastically said the Golden Spider, "your creditors are not pressing you for that amount?"

"Thank God, they are not, sir."

"In the second place, I don't care to open accounts with you."

Joncourt bit his lip half through and drummed impatiently on the edge of the table.

"Since you have been so curt, to call your action by no harsher name, I shall not leave this room till I've got the amount asked for. I have something better than the security I have offered."

"It is unnecessary to produce it," was the retort. "Let us call the incident closed."

"Just as you please," snapped Joncourt.

"Sit still," commanded old Barlow, and the next moment his hand, dropping into a drawer, came up and presented a cocked revolver to the bulging eyes of the man opposite.

"We're alone!" hissed the Golden Spider. "No one can hear us. I hold your life in my hands and I can be as merciless as the tiger."

"So can others," came back over the table.

"I can blow your brains out and the world will never know what became of Mr. Joncourt of Gunner's."

"I see that, but what if I have left with a certain party a note asking him to call here at twelve tonight if I am not at a certain place by half-past eleven?"

"That's all mere stuff."

"You have but to test it, Mr. Barlow."

"You're a desperate man, Joncourt."

"I know that, sir."

"You have systematically robbed Gunner's for years."

"Admitted," was the cool reply. "One has to live, you know."

"You can be arrested at any time for embezzlement and forgery."

"Yes, sir."

"To short, Tony Joncourt, you can be visited with the extreme penalty of the law."

"To the truth of all which I unhesitatingly subscribe," laughed the manager.

"And with this you still demand that I advance you the ten thousand?"

"I do."

Old Sam reached up and caught hold of a green cord that dangled over the table. This led was connected with Gunner's room, and the slightest jerk would summon the head servitor.

"Don't, Mr. Barlow," said Joncourt with a gesture of restraint. "This is private business. It concerns us and us alone."

The old man's hand fell to a level with the table, but the silver rim of the weapon was still in a level with the manager's head.

"If that is in hand-to-hand," coolly pursued Joncourt, "I can manage with them just as well as with the smaller one."

"Mr. Joncourt," said old Sam, "I'm going to kill you."

"Well, that's clever. It's seldom one has his death warrant read before his very eyes. I've never enjoyed this experience before. It's really exciting."

"You have just said that you have better security about you than which you have offered."

"Plenty of it, at your service."

"Will you produce it, Tony Joncourt?"

"When I see the bills."

"Now, this minute, or your life isn't worth the snuffing of a candle in Winter's chapel."

"And candles there are dirt cheap," snapped Joncourt. "Well, since you insist, here it is."

Tony Joncourt dived one hand into an inner pocket of his drab coat and produced a little package. He looked at the Golden Spider and began to unwrap the tissue covering of the package with the utmost coolness, watched all the time by his companion.

All at once there dropped from the package a ring, which would have rolled over to old Sam's hand if the long finger of Joncourt had not stopped it.

"We're alone!" hissed the Golden Spider.

"That's the additional security," he said with a sneer. "That and what I have to offer for the ten thousand."

The face of the Golden Spider turned livid and then white.

"You—in the name of Heaven, where did you get that?" he cried.

"You recognize it, eh, Mr. Barlow?"

"It was buried with her. I'll swear to that."

"Perhaps."

"It was on her finger."

"I'm glad you admit that you know the bauble. The eyes of Joncourt followed him and they are pressing me. I must have the ten thousand at once."

"But you haven't answered me!" exclaimed the Old Midas. "You show me her ring and that is all."

"I can keep secrets, sir," returned the manager. "Shall I have the banknotes?"

"And I'm to have the ring?"

"Yes, you'll have the ring."

Old Barlow got up and shuffled across the room. The eyes of Joncourt followed him. When he came back his hands were full of banknotes, and Gunner's man watched him count out the ten thousand and push the bills toward him.

With suppressed glee Joncourt raked in the notes and rose.

"Good night," said he, mockingly, at the door. "If I should want more I'll call again, for I've got more good security," and the next moment the Golden Spider was alone.

CHAPTER XII.

OLD SLUDGE'S MISSION.

When he had recovered in part from his amazement Sam Barlow jerked the cord above the table, and pattering feet came down the stair. In another moment the face of old Sludge appeared at the door. The Golden Spider made a sign and the old man came in.

"I'm going out, Gammer," said Sam.

The servant's eyes went to the clock and then caught the face at the table.

"Going out!" Master!" he exclaimed.

"I may not come back for some time, not, perhaps, for a whole month."

The eyes of Gammer Sludge bulged out, and his face betrayed his astonishment.

"You will keep the place for me," Barlow went on. "If any one calls, I am not in the city. I've gone to Berlin to see about some railroad bonds."

"To Berlin? Why, no ship sails tonight."

"It's a lie, of course, Gammer," and the old man smiled. "If the Berlin bond story shouldn't suit your fancy, say I've gone to the United States on private financial business."

"I like that better. Did the man who just left the house cause this sudden turn?"

"What man, Gammer?"

"The one I let in."

"Did you recognize him?"

"Yes. It was Mr. Tony Joncourt of Gunner's. I've seen him before."

Old Sam became interested.

"Where have you seen Tony Joncourt?" he asked eagerly.

"I saw him before he went to Gunner's. He wasn't Mr. Joncourt then."

"No?"

"Not by a long shot."

"Who was he, Gammer?"

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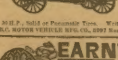

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The old servant smiled and remained silent for a moment.

"I saw him in the docks once when I took a breathing spell which I have never confessed to. It was full twenty years ago and there was a blooming lot to keep him company."

"Yes, what charge, Gammer?"

"Grave robbing, sir. They caught the wicked set one night, the bobbies did, and they got a few years."

"Tony, too?"

"Yes, sir."

"And he is now the manager of Gunner's?"

"It's quite a change for him, don't you think?"

Old Sam rose and took several turns about the room. When he came back to the table his face had undergone a great change.

"Do you know where he lodges?" he asked breathing hard.

"In Piebald street, near the end o' it, sir."

"And you know the house?"

"I know the very house. I was passing there once and saw him go in."

"You can do me a great service, Gammer," said old Sam. "In fact, you can make the your debtor for life."

"Tell me how, Master Sam."

"You will go to the house in Piebald street."

"Yes, sir. But when?"

"Tonight. Now!"

"I am to follow the man home?"

"Or get there before he does. Perhaps that would be better."

"Well?"

"You will find somewhere in this house, he must occupy but the one room, a bracelet, a ring somewhat like the one I shall show you, and perhaps a locket."

"Stolen plunder, master?"

"Yes, stolen stuff. You will possess yourself of all such stuff you may find."

"But what if I should encounter Tony?"

"You will take the articles even if you have to deprive Gunner's of a manager."

The face of Gammer Sludge went white and he recoiled in his chair.

"You don't mean that if I should find Tony at home——"

"You're a coward, Gammer Sludge. I'll go myself," the Golden Spider broke in. "I must have those things."

"I see they're valuable to you."

"More than tongue can tell. Do you want to see your master transported?"

"Heavens, no!"

"Do you want to see Sam Barlow in the felon's dock?"

"No, no!"

"Then bring me those things, even if you have to cause a vacancy at Gunner's."

The face of old Barlow had no color at all. It was pinched and drawn as if by the hand of object fear.

Once more he paced the floor, watched by the silent old man in the chair, and Gammer's green eyes did not leave him until he came back and sank into the chair.

"More than this. That man robbed me tonight; he went off with a cool ten thousand. It is yours if you bring back the things you find in the house in Piebald street."

"And if Tony interferes——"

"Don't come back without them, even if you have to kill!"

Old Sludge shuddered and his hand dropped from the edge of the table where he had placed it.

"That's all," resumed Barlow. "I'll wait for you here."

"But you said you were going away—to the United States."

"It depends. If you are unsuccessful I go. If you don't fail I'll remain."

Mr. Sludge, still looking intently at his master, left his seat and stood in the middle of the room.

"You may need this," continued old Sam, thrusting the revolver into his servant's hands. "Only don't fail. My future, my very life depends on your venture."

Gammer did not stir.

"May I speak, master?" he said in low and venturesome tones. "May I ask a question?"

"Ten if you want to, Gammer."

Old Sludge crossed the little space that separated them and stood at the Golden Spider's chair.

"Then, master, who is the woman in black?"

Slowly Barlow's gaze was elevated till it rested on the sallow face of his man.

"She's of no consequence now," he answered with forced blandness. "She's out of my world."

"Did she get the two millions?"

"What know you about that?" cried Barlow. "Who told you about the two millions?"

"Even old men like me have dreams," replied Gammer evasively. "I dreamed that she demanded two millions——"

"You don't want to dream such dreams. Not in this house, at least. Is that all?"

"No," said Mr. Sludge. "One more question."

Old Sam waited in silence, but his gaze was still riveted upon the man beside him.

"What has Madam Poman of Soho Place to do with the long absence of Tony?"

The Golden Spider rose slowly to his feet, and the hands that hands dropped upon old Sludge's shoulder.

"It's my secret," said he.

"Yours and hers, master?"

"Yes, if you would know. Mine and hers. Now go, Gammer, and bring me those things I want from Tony Joncourt's house."

With a parting look Gammer Sludge crossed the carpet and laid his hand on the latch of the heavy oaken door. He turned his head for the last time and said, in low and impressive tones:

"Good-by. I'll bring you those things or perish where you say they are kept."

With this he opened the door and went out. Old Sam heard him on the stair and then he heard him enter the street door portal opened and closed and that was all.

In the library sat an old man in the great chair where he had suffered millions with the heartlessness of a Turk.

It looked as if ten years had been added to his span within the last hour. He picked up the ring which Gammer had left and studied it in silence. Over and over in his hands he turned it, his face bloodless and his hands in a tremble of excitement.

"If Gammer fails all is lost," said he. "If he falls I am doomed. Grave robber, eh! He's more than that. I've paid the two millions, but I never took this sleek villain, this ex-convict, into account. If Gammer comes back empty-handed I have nothing left but this."

He opened the bosom of his shirt and took from next his skin a little chamois case. In this case appeared to be taken from the receptacle a small vial, which was half-filled with a greenish liquor, and as he held it up to the light it seemed to dance in a thousand golden sparkles.

"I am the master of a coward, I know, but I will not hesitate," he went on. "This new enemy, the man who holds my reputation in his merciless hands, is more dangerous than a thousand women in black and pinks. If I only knew what became of the child! Is she living, or does the grave hide her? If Gammer should fail—but he must not. God help me!"

He replaced the vial and fell forward with his head buried in his nerveless hands.

The continuation of this thrilling story will be found in the Ledger issue of next week. If you are not a regular subscriber to the Ledger we would like to have your name on our list. The Ledger is only $1.00 per year; it is worth many times that amount. Send in your subscription, for many great stories that you cannot afford to miss will appear during the coming months.

Pickled Peppers

Not in His Lifetime.

A well-known scientist was lecturing on the sun's heat, and in the course of his remarks said: "It is an established fact that the sun is gradually losing its heat, and in the course of some 70,000,000 of years it will be exhausted, consequently this world will be cold and dead and, like the moon, unable to support any form of life."

At this juncture a member of his audience rose in an excited manner and said:

"Pardon me, professor, but how many years did you say it would be before this calamity overtook us?"

The Professor—Seventy millions, sir.

"Thank God," was the reply. "I thought you said 7,000,000."

Natural Bement.

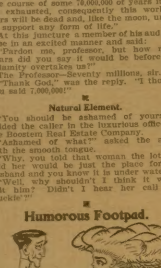
"You should be ashamed of yourself," chided the caller in the luxurious offices of the Independent Loan Company.

"Ashamed of what?" asked the agent with the smooth face.

"Why, you told that woman the lot you sold her would be just the place for her husband and you know it is under water."

"Well, why shouldn't I think it would suit him? Didn't I hear her call him duckie'?"

Humorous Footpad.



Circassian Girl—So you were held up, eh? Why didn't you offer him baksyansh to spare you?

Bowery Skeleton—I did and he said, "You are spare enough."

CHEERFUL EVENTS.

Molly for a husband sighed—
She got a preacher, "Wilt thou?"
And Amna pined to be a bride
Till she was nigh prostrated.
But Cupid came to Joln their side—
To unite them was very fated,
And thus was Molly mollified
And also Anna-mated.

Exceptional Gentleman.

"I concede to you," said a man in a discussion with a fellow politician, "that the Southern man is a gentleman, but that is all."

"But I know the Western man is," replied his friend. "Take President Taft; he is from the West, and he is an exceptional gentleman."

"Exceptional!" snorted the man. "How can he be an exceptional gentleman?"

"Well," vaguely replied the friend, "I saw President Taft recently get up and give his seat to three ladies!"

Her One Wish.

The wandering peddler stopped at the floutiest house in his pack.

"Mammy, let me show you some self-raising umbrellas," he began.

"No use, man; no use," interrupted the old colored woman as she busted herself about the door. "Can't use dem self-liftin' ink dats."

"How about self-raising window shades?"

"No good heah, kase deh ain't no windows wuth talkin' about."

"Self-raising buckwheat?"

"No good to me—we eat cohn pone. But, mister!"

"Well, mammy?"

"If you only know how to tuhn dese heah fohteen bad chillun into self-raising pickaninnies ahl'll be yo' friend fuh life, dat Ah will, sah."

To Term He Served.

"Were you ever in prison?" demanded the prosecuting attorney insinuatingly.

"Yes, sir," admitted the gray-headed witness for the defense.

"Ahn! I thought so. And what for, may I ask?"

"Assault with intent to kill."

"And how long were you in prison?"

"Until I escaped, sir."

The prosecutor retired triumphantly to the gentlemen of the jury.

"So, gentlemen," he said, "we have here, as the chief witness for the defense, an ex-convict and fugitive from justice, by his own confession."

He turned again to the witness. "When

and where were you in prison, sir?" he sneered.

The old man straightened up and spoke in a strong, clear voice:

"I was captured, sir, at the Battle of Fort Harris on Sept. 29, 1864, and sent to Libby prison, Richmond. I effected my escape while being transferred to Salisbury, N. C., As to——"

But that was already more than the prosecutor wanted to know.

Modern Athlete.

Pater—But, my son, you say you are home from college till spring?

Son—Yes, of course. I'm through with my football season and baseball doesn't begin till April.

Fooled by Their Ladder.

Clang, clatter, bang! Down the street came the fire engines.

Driving along ahead, oblivious of any danger, was a farmer in a ramshackle old buggy. A policeman yelled at him: "Hi, there, look out! The fire department's coming."

Turning in by the curb, the farmer watched the hose cart, salvage wagon and engine whizz past. Then he turned out into the street again and drove on. Barely had he started when the hook and ladder came tearing along. The rear wheel of the big truck slewed into the farmer's buggy, smashing it to smithereens and sending the farmer sprawling into the gutter. The fireman ran to his assistance.

"Didn't I tell ye to keep out of the way?" he demanded crossly. "Didn't I tell ye the fire department was comin'?"

"Well, consarn ye," said the peeved farmer, "I did git outen the way for the fire department. But what in tarnation was them drunken painters in such an all-fired hurry for?"

Home Training.

When Willie's father came home to supper there was a vacant chair at the table.

"Well, where's the boy?"

"William is upstairs in bed." The answer came with a painful precision from the sad-faced mother.

"Why, wh-what's up? Not sick is he?" (An anxious pause.)

"It grieves me to say, Robert, that, our only son—has been heard swearing on the street! I heard him."

Swearing. Scott! I'll teach him to swear. And he started upstairs in the dark. Half way up he stumbled and came down with his chin in the top step.

When the atmosphere cleared a little, Willie's mother was saying firmly from the hallway, "That will do, dear. You have given him enough for one time."

A Long-Felt Want.

Jinks—I've struck it now, sure. Bound to make my fortune in six months.

Kinks—What have you invented this time?

Jinks—A patent improved collar-button. You know how it is when you drop a collar-button. It always rolls all over the room and then disappears forever. Well, I've invented a self-acting constrictor attachment which opens the collar-button into a tack the instant it touches the floor.

Winks—But tacks sometimes roll.

Jinks—Yes; but I shall stop where you can easily find them by simply taking off your shoes.

Righteous Wrath.

"What were those two boys fighting about?"

"Johnny was trying to show Dicky how to make a noiseless popgun."

The one proof of man's superiority over woman is the fact that he never wears his clothes buttoned down the back.

Not the Same.

Customer—What is venison new?
Butcher—Venison is dear.
Customer—I know that's what it should be, but the last I got here seemed to be veal.

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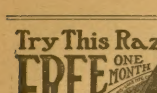

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GENTLE JABS.

No man is free who lacks self-control.

Most men who paint the town red make the air blue.

A man of letters may be jealous if his wife gets a few.

Even real-estate men occasionally build castles in the air.

A man may bow to the inevitable, but he doesn't lift his hat.

A fool is a person who is not addicted to our pet brand of folly.

Women with pretty teeth will laugh at any well-meaning joke.

Wall street should be examined every few days by insanity experts.

Congress is drawing its salary no matter how little it accomplishes.

There are but few unhappy marriages. The unhappiness comes later.

When girls blush with embarrassment they think it's burning them.

The man who doesn't count the cost is apt to feel cheap sooner or later.

When a financier begins by chloroforming his conscience, the rest is dead easy.

Some things may go without saying, but a woman's tongue isn't in that class.

Be a dreamer if you will, but get up and hustle when the alarm clocks goes off.

A man feels like kicking himself when a homely woman attempts to flirt with him.

Never judge a man's will power by what the lawyers do to the estate he leaves behind.

Some Chicago divorces are so quiet that you can almost hear the court's reputation drop.

We haven't much use for a miser, but it is better to freeze on to your money than burn it.

Men seldom appreciate the freedom of speech in this country until after they get married.

Ireland feels that its rule of Great Britain in the new Parliament will be entirely praiseworthy.

What has become of the old-fashioned girl who, when a love affair went wrong, pined away and died?

You, sir, may wear an extra-large hat, but remember that the broadest stream is sometimes the shallowest.

John L. Sullivan admits that even he made one or two mistakes in the course of his career. We believe he did meet Corbett.

Even a wise man can't tell when a woman laughs whether she really means it or is merely trying to show off a dimple to the best advantage.

In a recent lawsuit it came out that the selling company for an automobile firm got just half the purchase price. That may explain who gets a part of the money.

Theaters are to be established on ocean liners. With the daily newspapers also printed on board and with wireless messages arriving about the stock market, the man who goes away from home for a rest will have to go back home to get one.

(Continued from page five.)

to save him from crashing nearly a mile to the earth below.

He was exposed to another peril. The wounded leader of the Japanese aeroplane, evidently realizing the purpose of McKay's maneuver, raised his revolver and fired to prevent its consummation. Thrice his weapon spoke, but only once did it find a mark. That was when one bullet scraped its way across Captain McKay's cheek and raised a ridge of blood.

But the latter was undeterred. Despite the fact that the two interlocked airships were now swaying wildly in their headlong dash toward the earth, he raised himself almost to his tiptoes and with his ready knife slashed out a section of the silken balloon in which the Japanese craft had become entangled.

Both friends and enemies breathlessly watched the progress of the daring exploit. As the Captain steadied himself after ripping away the section of his own craft that held the prow of the enemy's, and waited impatiently for the latter to fall away, one foot suddenly slipped from its frail support on the front rail.

His men breathed a sigh of horror as they beheld him totter and recover his feet in the nick of time. With one hand only clasping the narrow steel rail in front plane of the airship, the Captain was dangling in air over a half-mile from terra firma.

No breath of fear seemed to be stretched out to aid him. He had risked himself into a position where no one could assist him.

Fortunately it was not his injured arm that held him from falling and fatal tumble. His grip was firm enough to enable him to draw up one foot and then the other and replace them on the precarious footing from which they had slipped.

Then, not waiting to recover his breath, he again reached up and tore away the entangled prow of the Japanese craft. With a sickening cry from the two wounded men aboard, the foreign aeroplane, with added impetus, started downward, and in another half-minute lay a crumpled wreck upon the ground. Its occupants never moved after striking the earth. Death was instantaneous.

The escape of Captain McKay, his crew and ship from a similar fate was regarded as only by the narrowest margin.

The impetus contracted while the Japanese airship was descending to the American down was so great that all the power in McKay's motor could not check the speed of the momentum.

The Captain's assistant fairly perspired blood as he strove at steering wheel and motor lever to stay the aeroplane's fall.

When hope seemed gone, Captain McKay, madly risking death, leaped lightly to the platform, grabbed the rudder from his aide's hand and turned off the power completely. Then he swung wheel and motor around until he managed to get his craft's prow pointed upward.

The effect of the maneuver was remarkable. Shutting off the power had the result of slackening the airship's speed so greatly that it responded almost immediately to the fan-like rudder extended far to the rear, swinging upward out of immediate danger when within only a few yards of the earth.

But their peril was not altogether past. As the airship shot upward, Captain McKay heard a hissing noise close by, and looking sharply down saw a trail of fire marking the way of some mysterious missile in its descent.

"Look for us that didn't hit us," said McKay to his men, nodding downward, "and fire at that airship."

"That whizzing light is part of those new Japanese war balloons invented for aerial work. They're almost as destructive when they strike as one of those rattle, but they can't shoot them as far or as accurately. In fact, the last we heard about them was that they had not yet got so they could them except by hand."

At that instant there came from below a flash of blinding yellow light that shot out ugly, lurid arms in all directions.

A roar of explosion followed that seemed to stagger the very air about the airship, made the heavens echo as with a mighty crash of thunder.

"That's what missed us," shouted the Captain, with a set grin. "You can imagine what would be if it had struck us."

"I don't like to imagine it," was the response from behind him. "Besides I keep thinking of the thousands of kinds of devilish things where that one came from."

The fear was barely spoken before another bomb came whizzing by them, this time just grazing the propeller. In less than a minute, the dull roar of its explosion rose from below.

The Captain steered his ship as directly into the sky as he could and turned on full power that he might get out of range of the Japanese above him. He found, however, that the damage done to the ship in the collision with the enemy had reduced its buoyancy so that its rate of progress was about cut in half.

As he hurriedly thought how it would be possible to effect repairs, one of his aides leaned forward and exclaimed:

"Look, Captain, over to the south of us. Those Japanese bombs have blown up one of our fleet of their own."

Looking in the direction indicated, McKay saw a great, greenish flame enveloping the wings of one of the aeroplanes.

CHAPTER XIV.

WEAPONS OF POISON.

Captain McKay was not long in deciding that it was one of his own airships that had been struck. The green color of the exploded Japanese bomb, he recognized by the size of the burning air craft that the United States had lost another of its valuable aeroplanes. This made the second loss since hostilities opened, besides the serious injury to his own ship.

Then, as he soared to the fast-falling and ruined airship, he sniffed the air repeatedly.

"Boys," he exclaimed tensely, "do you smell anything peculiar?"

They in turn began to sniff.

"Sure," was the quick reply, "strong, isn't it?"

"Do you imagine what it is?"

"Comes from that green flame, doesn't it?"

"You're right," declared McKay hastily, "those Japanese are using poisonous fumes in those bombs of theirs. It's against the rules of warfare established at the Hague Peace Conference, but I suppose they think they can hide it up here."

"Shall we turn back?"

"No, maybe not," shouted the Captain, "but I'll shoot down any one now. Load your guns and let them have the best you've got, and don't stop until I tell you to stop. I guess we'll teach them a thing or two."

More results followed quickly. While McKay's assistants loaded and aimed their gun with rapidity, he swung the prow of his craft away from the danger zone created by the poisonous bomb and hastened to a higher level, meantime, flashing the order continuously with his colored lights:

"Fire radius as far as you can, but do not hit any of your own ships."

Through the darkness the powerful explosive of the United States Army was speedily being hurled by the intermittent lights of the enemy's craft. It was perilous work, this indiscriminate shooting in midair, but in not other way did it seem possible to check the operations of the foe.

Fortune favored the daring operations of McKay. The heavens were soon ablaze with flashes from the guns of the aeroplanes and deafened with the crash of the slender but deadly shells in the air.

McKay maneuvered his aeroplanes so that none of them would be in the line of fire, at the same time keeping them far enough away from and above the Japanese craft to escape damage from the poisonous bombs. Occasionally he heard the sharp report of a revolver as he knew the foe was trying to pick off his force in that way, but he was glad to see, as he soared about, that the bullets found no mark.

It was otherwise with the American craft. Several fell headlong from them but barely opened before, out of the heavens, would come a shell or yellow light immediately followed by the roar of an explosion.

"It's one of the Jap airships," he shouted. "We've struck one of their gasoline tank or their motor." Then, after a pause, "Great work, boys; keep it up."

But the explosion of the one ship of the enemy was the only result of the disaster. The flames, projected widely about in the explosion, struck the flimsy planes of one of them, another of the Japanese airships circling close by and instantly set them ablaze.

Captain McKay, across the now lurid heavens, could see that fired to ram up and failed, these make four of the seven which he had thus far disposed of. There are three left. We'll now proceed to get busy with them."

Sweeping his night sky with his glasses, the Captain saw one of the remaining airships in retreat, apparently slow and unsteady progress, but still pointed toward the north.

"Follow me," he speedily signaled as he darted after the evidently damaged flyer.

The two American aeroplanes were quickly lined up in pursuit. The progress of the retreating craft kept to the east of their leader's handicapped ship, but it was soon apparent that they would have a close range of the Jap craft.

"Fire," the colored lights flashed from McKay's aeroplane.

Almost instantly the guns on all four

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American airships cracked sharply out. Again the signal flashed, and again the guns cracked, this time to some purpose.

The flashes from the discharge had barely died away before the Japanese quarry seemed to stop dead, then flame with light and drop like a tiny blazing meteor toward the earth.

"That's the fifth," called Captain McKay with a touch of pride in his tired voice, for the strenuous night's operations had long since begun to tell on the vitality of himself and his force. "There's only two left now and you can see them both off there to the south—between us and the lines of their army. We'll have to make quick work to get them, for they're evidently bound backward."

The chase was quickly ended. One of the pursued ships dipped downward and made straight for the earth. McKay could not tell whether the movement was the result of injuries or an attempt to save the airship from destruction under the American fire.

The seventh ship of the foe kept straight onward at top speed toward its own lines and was so soon out of sight that Captain McKay decided it unwise to continue the chase further, lest his exhausted men should give out completely while in air over the invading army.

Accordingly he signaled them to retire and follow him in a descent. The four aeroplanes swept gently to earth and the tired and stiffened men, unstrapping themselves from their narrow seats, moored their ships to the trunks of neighboring trees and then stretched themselves vigorously.

Some were throwing themselves on the ground for sleep, although they realized that the Japanese advance guard could not be cramped far from them. All were recalled to action, however, by a word from Captain McKay:

"Boys, I can see some flickering light through the trees yonder. We'll have to make sure of what it is before we can take any rest. Follow me with revolvers ready except you, Lieutenants Hale and your two aides, who'll stay behind to guard the ships."

Through the thick foliage McKay and his men picked their way carefully and after a few minutes' work they reached the edge of an open field. Here they beheld, by a swaying light hung from the arm of the Japanese airship that had evaded them by dashing to earth.

On the ground lay a uniformed man, evidently wounded, for his face was crimson-stained, while over him bent another, trying to stop the flow of blood.

"Surrender, or I'll fire," cried McKay, and with revolver drawn, he advanced into the open.

The wounded Jap raised his head, while his companion leaped to his feet and moved as if to draw a weapon.

Before he could lay hands on one, however, Captain McKay reached him and brought the butt of his own gun down on the man's head. He was then easily secured. The wounded foe, prone on the ground, was too weak to offer any objection to capture.

"We'll include their airship in the spoils of war," said McKay, as he inspected the Japanese aeroplane near by. "It appears to be all right."

Then, posting a guard over the two captives, he ordered the rest of his force to dispose themselves for a short sleep.

"At daybreak," were his good night words, "we'll begin our attack on the Japanese army."

(CHAPTER XV.

THE WHITE FLAG RAISED.

In the gray of dawn Captain McKay was the first of his party stirring. He was sorely tired as was every one of his force as he briskly aroused them from their nights' rest on the bare ground. No exertion in the world is so severe on body and mind as the task of operating and fighting from a flying craft in the air.

McKay's first task was to inspect the injuries which his own airship had suffered. With tools and stretches of strong oiled silk he set some of his men to work to repair the damage done by the Japanese craft.

To others he gave the work of seeing if there were any gasoline aboard the various members of his aerial squadron to serve them through another flight.

Then he set off to see how his captive men and ship had passed the night. As he neared the spot where he had moored the Japanese airship and its crew of two, he saw a coat had been spread over the head of the wounded man.

"He died shortly after you left," was the explanation of the guard the Captain had posted.

McKay scrutinized the captive aeroplane carefully. It was neither as large nor as powerful as the American ships, showing that the little brown men of the Orient were far behind the race in the matter of the development of this branch of warfare.

Examining more closely, he opened what was evidently the ammunition chest of the aircraft, a square box of aluminum, secured beneath the driver's seat.

From this he picked a small steel shell, probably six inches in diameter. From one side protruded a thin fuse.

"These are the deviltish things with their poisonous fumes that they were throwing at us last night," he said, showing the ugly missile to the side with him.

"Why not appropriate some of them and use them against their own army when we go up over it this morning?" the assistant suggested.

"No," was the Captain's prompt answer. "We'll fight fair," he said, as they don't. I'm not going to have my country charged with violating the rules of war."

An hour later, with the sun peeping through a thick haze above the eastern horizon, four American aeroplanes soared gracefully into the sky, rising until from the earth below, they seemed no larger than giant birds of prey. McKay did not intend to risk remaining low enough to enable the high-power Japanese guns to reach his ships.

The Americans had not risen far before a marvelous scene stretched out below them. For miles and miles to the southward, as far as their eyes could reach, they beheld intermingable lines of white tents.

Bringing his glasses to bear on the monster encampment, McKay beheld great brown masses in action like so many hills of busy ants.

Horses, too, he could distinguish in the scene, all in motion and all moving to the southward.

"Boys, try these on those brown spots below and see what you can make of their motion," the Captain suggested, passing his glasses.

"By the great Jehosephat," was the quick exclamation, "the whole aggregation is in motion toward the sea. Sure, it's retreat."

"Then we'll make it a rout," was the decided response from McKay.

Signaling full speed and "Follow me," he ordered his craft headed straight for the radite. In ten minutes they were hovering over what they quickly perceived to be Japanese invaders, but now its rear-guard, the cavalry.

The Captain fluttered a daylight signal with a small red pennon, marked with a white cross, to his men.

Almost instantly the small, powerful guns of the American aeroplanes began to spit their shower of death upon the massive army stretched out below them.

Nor did they go at the task leisurely. As fast as the guns could be handled, they were carefully loaded with the deadly explosive, quickly sighted and discharged at the huge, packed mass below.

Through his glasses, Captain McKay narrowly watched for results. They came quickly enough and almost stunned him. He saw, following the thin smoke of explosion, whole companies of Japanese cavalry literally torn to fragments and scattered over the landscape, spotting the long marching columns.

Cavalry and artillery, too, suffered as terribly. Horses and men, big field guns and caissons were hurled in pieces. Scattered over adjoining sections of the country, the terrifying sight of mangled companies, the victims of an unseen foe, quickly threw the unharmed soldiery into fright, and then, as the slaughter went on, into demoniacal faces of the terrified troops raised to the sky.

"They've discovered us," he exclaimed between the discharges of the guns of his plane's gun. "Now they'll probably try to reach us with some of their own artillery. The conjecture was correct, for the rout became complete, McKay saw sections of field artillery unlimbered and the muzzles of cannon elevated into the sky. But no damage to the fighters in the air resulted. Either the range was too great or the Japanese gunners had not mastered the difficult problem of firing their big guns directly upward.

Realizing that he and his men were comparatively safe, the American leader rapidly moved his aeroplanes closer to the head of the retreating army. Here the destruction was still more awful, since the columns were moving in closer formation.

McKay beheld what appeared to be hundreds of men wiped out at each explosion. The panic, which had been partially restrained when it first developed here, broke all bounds. Charging horses, freed of their riders, increased the tumult by dashing among bodies of troops that the rudite explosions had not yet laid low.

Whole companies, regiments, brigades, throwing their guns away, broke into a wild chase, all seemingly bent on reaching the seashore, a dozen or more miles distant. Then, to his surprise and relief—for the awful destruction he was visiting on the invading army made him sick at heart—Captain McKay beheld, on a hill to the left of the routed army's progress, a great white flag of truce in the breeze.

"Boys, what do you make of that?" he asked, pointing toward the banner.

"A white flag of truce, if it's anything," was the reply.

McKay quickly signaled his ships to cease firing. Then he swung around to within speaking distance of each of them, repeating these instructions:

"I'm going down there to find out what that flag means. If you don't see me ascending again within an hour, you can begin bombarding again. Lieutenant Mills, of course, will be in command."

And with a wide sweep the Captain directed his aeroplane's course downward to the spot where the Japanese behind the white flag still fluttering.

(Continued next week.)

Fortunate.

"You are really most careless, Mary. That is the second plate you have broken this week."

"Ah! ma'am, but I've been lucky this time."

"Lucky!"

"Yes, because it is only broken in two pieces. You've no idea what trouble it is picking up the little bits."

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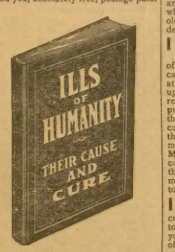

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CATARRH.....	FEMALE TROUBLE.....
DROPSY.....	TORPID LIVER.....
PILES.....	VARICOSE VEINS.....
NEURALGIA.....	CHRONIC COUGH.....
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It is unsightly, uncomfortable, spoils the figure, causing wrinkles, flabbiness and loss of vigor.

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I would fill every page of this journal with testimonials like these.

It is dangerous to reduce flesh by unscientific and embarrassing to be too fat. Excess fat weakens the heart, the kidneys, lungs and vital organs, causing short breath, dizziness, fainting spells, and the end comes in HEART FAILURE. Don't neglect yourself. You can reduce your fat safely.

I want to prove to you that my Proof Treatment will do what I say. FREE

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Will Break Up a Cold in Twenty-four Hours and Cure Any Cough That is Curable.

The following mixture is often prescribed and is highly recommended for coughs, colds and other throat and bronchial trouble: Mix two ounces of Glycerine, a half ounce of Virgin Oil of Pine compound pure, and eight ounces of pure Whisky. These can be bought at any good drug store and easily mixed together in a large bottle. The genuine Virgin Oil of Pine compound pure is prepared only in the laboratories of the Lesch Chemical Co., Cincinnati, and put up for dispensing in half-ounce vials.

Poor Father.

Maudie—Pa, will our new mamma go mad after a while?

Father—What a question! Why did you think of such a thing?

Maudie—Well, I heard her tell the cook that she got badly bitten when she married you.

IT CURES RHEUMATISM.

A Kansas City Man Who Discovered a Simple Prescription That Cures Rheumatism Makes a Liberal Offer.

Mr. H. Lee, a chemist, located at 106 E East Eighth st., Kansas City, Mo., discovered a simple preparation that cures any form of Rheumatism. Mr. Lee said: "A friend of mine who had a very bad case of Rheumatism tried the preparation and was completely cured. Hundreds of people here in the city began to call on me about it, and hundreds of people have been cured by it. Now I am receiving many letters from people all over the country who want to know about it. I will gladly give anyone information who writes me."

Anyone troubled with Rheumatism should write Mr. H. Lee, 106 E East Eighth st., as this information is sent free.

On the Suburban Train.

Newcomer (who has recently moved to the "country")—Who is that fellow in the middle of the car—that windy man who is forever blowing?

Longtimer (an old settler)—I don't really know, but I heard some one say that everything that he was a draftsman.

FREE SCHOLARSHIPS FOR OUR READERS

Rochester, N. Y., Feb. 1st, 1910.—The Board of Managers of Franklin Institute, Dept. P 32, today decided to present young men and women with Free Scholarships in Civil Service Examinations for the U. S. Rural Mail Postoffice and Customs Service. All you need do is apply at once. A postal with the applicant's name is required. If very large class is large feet.

Consoling Him.

"Why do you look so sad, young man?" asked the stern parent.

"I wanted to come under your daughter's window and sing: 'Roll On, Silver Moon,'" sighed the modern troubadour.

"Oh, don't let that worry you. Even if you don't come the moon will roll on."

A Chance to Make Money.

Yes, elegant free homesteads can still be had in Mexico where many Americans are now locating. You need not go to Mexico, but are required to have five acres of fruit trees planted within five years. For information address the Juntha Plantation Co., Block 598, Pittsburg, Pa. They will plant and care for your trees on shares, so you should make a thousand dollars a year. It is never hot, never cold. The health conditions are perfect.

Curiosity Aroused.

Polite Salesman—Here is something I would like to call your attention to, madam. It is the very latest thing out.

Mrs. Rounder (acerbity)—If there's anything out later than my husband I'll take it. If only for a curiosity.

WOMEN SHOULD KNOW THIS.

Have you tried various remedies for diseases peculiar to our sex? Suppositories and douches are mostly come to nothing. Other oil or other fats. They can't cure you. Medical Science has discovered that these fats and oils prevent the action of the medicine. You should know **why**. I want to explain it to you. And I want you to try a remedy which will cure—which contains no oils or fats—just pure medicine that acts quickly and surely. It is called a Blood Vitalizer, and the explanatory booklet absolutely free. Address Ella Moward, Box 498, South Bend, Ind.

When He Suffered.

Bessie—The doctor told mamma that too much candy creates agony. Did it ever create an agony with you?

Bobby—Sure!

Bessie—When?

Bobby—When I couldn't get it.

FREE ASTHMA CURE.

D. J. Lane, a chemist, at 115 Lane Bldg., St. Marys, Kansas, manufacturers a remedy for Asthma in which he has so much confidence that he sends a $1 bottle by express to anyone who will write for it. His offer is that he is to be paid for it if it cures, and the one taking the treatment is to be the judge.

Wakeful.

Ponleigh—I say, doctor, is insomnia contagious?

Doctor—Of course not.

Ponleigh—Well, I thought perhaps it was. Every time the baby has it I can't sleep a wink.

AGENTS WANTED

GREAT MONEY MAKER FOR AGENTS

Self Magnetic Combs and get rich; agents wild with joy. Write quick for terms.

Dandruff, stop falling hair or no cost. That remove dandruff; stop falling hair or no cost. That remove dandruff, never fress. Sample free. HAVE HEADACHE, never fress. Sample free. Address PROF. LONG, 757 Add St., PEKIN, ILL.

Not Asking Much.

The multimillionaire was uncertain. "But how do I know you can support my daughter in the manner in which she has been accustomed?" he demanded dubiously.

The imported nobleman smiled blandly. "I will go so test," he volunteered.

"What test?"

"I will lif with you one year and see how she is accustomed and zen I will know what to say."

But just then James, the footman, liberated the $5,000 bulldog.

An Experienced Man.

"How do you conquer your elephant when he goes on a rampage?" I asked the menagerie proprietor.

"We avail ourselves of an experienced baggage man," he replied.

"An experienced baggage man?" I repeated with wonderment.

"Yes," he explained patiently, although it was evident that he was settled by my stupidity, "we get a man who knows how to smash trunks."

Generous.

"Come here, Tommy, called his mother from the edge of the pond, as she concealed the birch switch behind her.

"What do you want, ma?" asked the little boy, suspiciously.

"I want to give you something."

"I—I ain't doing nuttin', ma!"

"Then I shall be even more liberal. I am going to give you something for nothing."

How It Happened.

Rodrick—How did Perkins come to enjoy those rank cigars his wife gave him for a Christmas present?

Van Albert—Why, you know each cigar came in a celluloid tube.

Rodrick—Ah, I see.

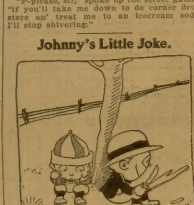
Van Albert—Yes, and he smoked the celluloid tubes by mistake.

Modest Request.

"Poor little boy!" said the sympathetic stranger, "you must have mittens and woolen stockings such icy weather as this. Just see how you are shivering."

"P-please, sir," spoke up the street gamin, "if you'll take me down to de corner drug store an' treat me to an icecream soda, I'll stop shivering."

Johnny's Little Joke.



Johnny—George Washington was er great man, de father of his country an' all dat, but jest de same yer kin bet yer sweet life I'm glad I wasn't him.

Tommy—Why not?

Johnny—Cause he's dead!

Main Objection.

Broker—Let me recommend a young woman stenographer.

Banker—Is she a good one?

Broker—Good? Why, man, she is a humdinger!

Banker—Then I'm afraid she won't do. I discharged the other one for humming. A whistling office boy is about all I can stand.

Polite Attention.

Friend—You ought to look after that cold of yours. A neglected cold often leads to serious consequences.

Young Millionaire—This one is not neglected. In fact, one or five hundred friends are thinking about it.

Not Sufficiently Clear.

Adley—Rhellers is in the shade business.

Harnold—Window or spook?

TICKLISH

Different.

Windig—Do you mean to say you believe that story Blinks told us this morning?

Hobert—Sure I do.

Windig—Well, I'm surprised. Why, I wouldn't believe it if I had told it myself.

Hobert—Neither would I.

End of the Engagement.

Pearl—The horrid man! I returned his letters labeled, "The Love Letters of a Goose."

Ruby—And what happened, dear?

Pearl—He returned mine labeled, "The Love Letters of a Hen."

THE LESSON IT TAUGHT.

Teacher—When little George Washington's father forgave him for cutting down the cherry tree what lesson did it teach?

Earlie—That it's a wise father who knows when to bury the hatchet.

The Lazy Man Again.

The stranger found the lazy man sitting at the window smoking his pipe.

"Do you know that an automobile just passed and ran over one of your chickens?" asked the stranger.

"Yes, I saw it," yawned the lazy man.

"Well, why don't you go out and pick up the fowl for your dinner?"

"I'm waiting, pardner."

"Waiting for what?"

"Why, waiting for another automobile to come along and pluck off its feathers."

Snodgrass' Scheme.

"I'll give you $100 if you'll move into the house next to mine," said Mr. Snodgrass to the man with the stentorian voice.

"What is your scheme?" vibrated the other.

"Why," explained Mr. Snodgrass, "the houses are a mile apart and I'm trying to sell my house to a timid lady who specifies it must be within calling distance from her next door neighbor."

Two Reasons.

Seymour—I don't intend to marry until I reach the years of discretion.

Ashley—In that case you'll never marry.

Seymour—How do you make that out?

Ashley—In the first place, you would never reach the years of discretion even if you lived a thousand years; in the second place, if you did reach the years of discretion you would know enough not to marry.

JUST AS COURAGEOUS.

Wifey—What a brave man George Washington was.

Hubby—I don't know that he was any braver than I, for I, too, married a widow.

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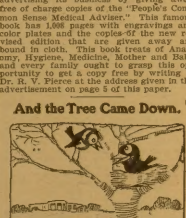
The well known Pierce Co. of Buffalo, is advertising its business by giving away free of charge copies of the "People's Common Sense Medical Adviser." This famous book has 1,008 pages with engravings and color plates and the copies of the new revised edition that are given away are bound in cloth. This book treats of Anatomy, Hygiene, Medicine, Mother and Babe and every family ought to grasp this opportunity to get a copy free by writing to Dr. R. V. Pierce at the address given in the advertisement on page 5 of this paper.

And the Tree Came Down.



"Did you hear about Mrs. Roblin losing her home?"

"You don't say! What was the cause of it, a cyclone?"

"No, a kid with a hatchet."

LADIES, PRESERVE YOUR YOUTHFUL APPEARANCE.

Madame Mignette's Beauty Cream and Skin Food removes every defect, viz: freckle, pimple, blemish or wrinkle, leaving the skin soft, clear and beautiful. A perfectly harmless and safe cut (takes the most delicate skin. It preserves and brings back the youthful glow to the face and rediffuses to the cheeks, preserving it in this condition until extreme old age. This preparation has been used for years and hundreds are now using it and are more than delighted with the results. Sold by all up to date agents for 50 cents a box. Any friend of our drug store at a very small cost. Do not delay, but write at once. Sent free, Mignette, Pa.

Too Uncertain.

"No," said the thoughtful thinker, "I don't think much of wireless telegraphy."

"Why not?" queried his friend.

"Well," answered the t. t., if I happened to go broke away from home and had to telegraph for funds, I wouldn't feel safe in trusting to the wireless system. Even the real wire would be uncertain enough."

A Man of Capital.

Biggs—Roxleigh is a capital fellow, isn't he?

Diggs—Naturally. He's a millionaire.

TACKLES

GET POWER

The Supply Comes From Food.

If we get power from food, why not strive to get all the power we can. That is only possible by use of skilfully selected food that exactly fits the requirements of the body.

Poor fuel makes a poor fire and a poor fire is not a good steam producer.

"From not knowing how to select the right food to fit my needs, I suffered grievously for a long time from stomach troubles," writes a lady from a little town in Missouri.

"It seemed as if I would never be able to find out the sort of food that was best for me. Hardly anything that I could eat would stay on my stomach. Every attempt gave me heart-burn and filled my stomach with gas. I got thinner and thinner until I literally became a living skeleton and in time was compelled to keep to my bed.

"A few months ago I was persuaded to try Grape-Nuts food, and it had such good effect from the very beginning that I have kept up its use ever since. I was surprised at the ease with which I digested it. It proved to be just what I needed.

"All my unpleasant symptoms, the heart-burn, the inflated feeling which gave me so much pain disappeared. My weight gradually increased from 98 to 116 lbs., my figure rounded out, my strength came back, and I am now able to do my housework and enjoy it. Grape-Nuts did it."

A ten days' trial will show anyone some facts about food.

Look in pkgs. for the little book, "The Road to Wellville." "There's a Reason."

Ever read the above letter? A new one appears from time to time. They are genuine, true, and full of human interest.

Two Babies.

Mrs. Newma—"Oh, I wish you could see Mrs. Winkler's baby. It's perfectly lovely! Such a delicate, sweet little creature it is! It's a perfect little cherub, with the loveliest eyes, the sweetest little mouth, the cunningest little nose, and eyes of heavenly blue. It looks as if it had just dropped from heaven and every tiny feature had been fashioned by the angels.

Mr. Newma—Is it as nice as our baby?

Mrs. Newma—Mercy! no, not half.

A CHANCE TO MAKE MONEY.

You can make big money down near Mobile growing Sumatra and Havana Wrapper Tobacco, $5,000 a year on a five acre farm costing $500. Write S. L. Boggs, Dept. A, 836 Keystone Bldg., Pittsburgh, Pa. Buy a farm, have an income and a lovely home.

Grateful.

Husband—No, Mary, you can never accuse me of meanness. I paid $39 for that hat and $50 for that dress. I always like to see my wife well dressed.

Wife (kindly)—And I like to see you look well, too, Harry. Give me that hat, and I'll touch up those rusty spots with this shoe blacking.

Three Balls.

Stubb—The best umbrellas to put up quickly are those with the patent steel spring.

Penn—Hm! I have found those with a gold handle the most convenient to "put up."

Still Unanswered.

Her Husband—Why is it that a woman always begins to lift her skirts before she gets within ten yards of a mud puddle?

His wife—Why is it that a man never stops to roll up his trousers until he gets half way through a mud puddle?

A Noninherited Virtue.

The American Eagle (exulting)—Our Washington never told a lie!

The British Lion (growling)—It's a pity your bloomin' country didn't take after it's father.

LINE DIED OUT.

Mabel—Did George Washington leave any descendants?

Harry—I guess not. I never met any one with his leading characteristic.

No Spare Hours.

Mr. Hayseed (arriving at city hotel)—I s'pose I kin hear the gong here when it rings for dinner, can't I?

Clerk—We have no gong. We have breakfast from 8 to 11, dinner from 12 to 6, supper from 6 to 11.

Mr. Hayseed—Jehoshaphat! How am I to git time to see the city?

The Cause.

Said He—Were they divorced because of a misunderstanding?

Said She—No; because they understood each other too well.

Sort of a Hobby.

Minnie—I hear she's been engaged ten times.

Esther—I hate to see a girl get in a rut like that.

Why George Washington Did It

Little George (chopping down tree with coon in top)—Just wait a minute, Spot, and we'll have her down.

His Egg Producer.

Ashley—I suppose you remember that wonderful white Leghorn hen of mine?

Seymour—Yes; what about her?

Ashley—I want to tell you about her laying; it's something remarkable; why, some days last summer she laid more eggs than all my other hens put together.

Seymour—What was the matter with the other hens?

Ashley—They were sitting.

Trouble Makers.

"What men think," remarked the knowing woman, "causes fully one-third of all the trouble in the world."

"Yes," rejoined the mere man, "and what women say causes the other two-thirds."

One of Many.

Gyer—There goes a man who has acquired a reputation as a promoter.

Myer—Perhaps I could get him to handle my patent. What does he promote?

Gyer—His own interests, chiefly.

Out for No One.

She—Take back the ring. I could never be happy with you.

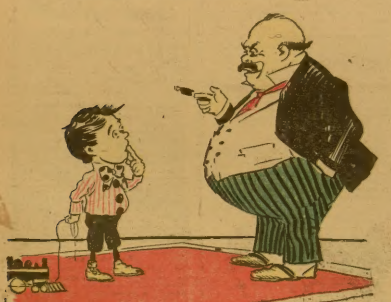
He—I don't know as it's any worse for you to be unhappy with me than it is for me to be unhappy without you.

Was It a Protest.

Wisdig—You should have been at the dentist last night. The table fairly groaned.

Kidd—Why, did you make a speech?

NO QUESTIONS TO ANSWER.



Hobby—Say, pop, do you believe George Washington never told a lie?

Pops—Certainly, sonny. He didn't have to. He had no kids to tell 'em to!

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Easy Money For You

You don't really earn $5 to $10 a day selling Dr. Scott's Electric Hair Brush—many specialties made. Nothing to or experience necessary—we teach you the business & back you with capital.

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Biggest line of fine woolens to take orders from—fit and workmanship guaranteed. Tailoring agent wanted in every town. Easily sold to wearer. Write for agent's outfit FREE.

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AGENTS Guaranteed Honesty in fighting cancer, tumor, blood poison, etc. Enclose stamp. FORMER CO., 1030, Dayton, Ohio.

AGENTS, CREDIT, Perfumes, Flavors, etc., Big profits. Express Paid. Terms Free. HUMBER AGENCY CO., Box 205, Sta'e L, New York

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MEN WANTED QUICKLY By big Chicago mail order house to distribute catalogues, advertise, $25 weekly. Liberal expense allowance. MANUFACTURERS, 1216 State Street, Chicago.

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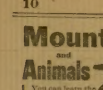

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Free Music Instructions by Our New Diagram System

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OUR MONEY-SAVING PLAN

Remember, you can have the Kimball Organ for the price of a cheap piano. Don't be misled by the "special" piano offer. Don't be misled by the "special" piano offer. Don't be misled by the "special" piano offer

the removal of Cardona," continued Vassar. "They kept him drugged so as to hold him helpless and harmless till they reach their native land, until he tells, or is tortured into telling what he did with the iron crown of Aviilo."

Grace had risen to her feet, every vestige of color leaving her lovely face.

"They have left the city?" she cried.

"Yes, three days since," said Vassar.

"Oh, Mr. Vassar!" gasped poor Grace, reeling where she stood, "it was not Cardona your friends carried away in!"

"Not Cardona?" spoke the old man vaguely.

"No.

Who was it, then?"

"Shirley Moore!"

CHAPTER XXIV.

CONCLUSION.

Grace Lanyon sank pale and breathless to a chair as she spoke the startling words that announced a terrible mistake on the part of old Abel Vassar and his South American friends.

Doctor Dacre saw that she was overcome, and he hastened to her side.

"Grace, agitate yourself unduly, Miss Lanyon," he said assuringly. "I will explain to Mr. Vassar, and we will soon have this strange tangle unraveled."

"Oh, I hope so! I pray so!" murmured Grace faintly, but with fervor.

The young physician left the apartment with Vassar. Eva hastened to the side of her dear friend, and they were clasped in one another's arms. Grace was softly. The reaction from all the excitement of the previous two weeks unnerved her.

She listened sympathetically as Eva blushingly told of how hard it had been to part with Basil.

"If he loves you, he will return," said Grace.

"We love one another, dear," answered Eva, "and he will return. He knows that I felt it was his duty, however, to remain with his friend, the Prince, until Zimene found the stolen crown and was restored to the throne of Avilio."

There was nothing to do but to wait patiently some word from Vassar and Doctor Dacre. Grace heard them in the house together. It was nearly an hour before the young physician returned.

His face was bright and happy as he announced to Grace:

"I have the best of news for you, Miss Lanyon."

"Tell it quickly, then!" pleaded the anxious Eva.

"Mr. Vassar has spared no expense to reach the South Americans by wire. He has succeeded in stopping them just as they were starting to take on a steamer for Panama."

"Oh, thank Heaven!" murmured Grace ardently.

"He is going to get the young man they call Basil on the long distance telephone, and make the arrangements for the return of the Prince and Mr. Moore to the city here."

"And everything is going to turn out happily!" exclaimed Eva radiantly.

"Mr. Vassar wishes here soon," continued Doctor Dacre. "Miss Lanyon, would it not be well to meet him with a glad surprise?"

"Rachel!"

"Angel—yes."

Grace and the doctor held a hurried conversation. The doctor left the house, returned again, then accompanied this time, and Eva was fluttering with joy and anticipation as certain mysterious arrangements were made to welcome Vassar upon his return.

Old Abel Vassar came into the house a little later. He was bustling with excitement, and for the first time everything had been satisfactorily arranged.

"Mr. Vassar Zimene will return with Mr. Moore and Basil," said the old man. "The memoranda you have concerning the hiding place of the stolen iron crown will clear up all the mystery."

"Some one is waiting for you in the next room, Mr. Vassar," said Grace just then, but in so low a tone that the keen observed old man detected the unusual accents in her voice and regarded her fixedly.

"Some one waiting to see me?" he repeated.

"Yes, sir."

Ah, Doctor Dacre——"

No," said Grace. "Dear old friend," she spoke tenderly, "prepare for a great surprise, for a wonderful joy."

Vassar paled a little and to tremble all over.

"Miss Lanyon," he gasped, "do not arouse my hopes——"

"Go!" urged Grace, leading him into the next apartment.

From its place on the wall, its old, familiar, grand place, the portrait of the first Rachel Vassar looked down on the old man. Directly opposite, under it, as if she had just stepped from the glowing canvas, was his beautiful young wife.

"Father! oh, my dear, dear father!" rang out a glad, loving voice, clear and musical as golden bells dropped into a crystal dish.

"My child! my Rachel! Oh, Heaven is kind to me!" cried the old Abel Vassar, as he clasped her in his arms, his long-lost daughter.

* * * * * * *

Like a series of dissolving views or the scenes in some actual drama of rare human interest, there followed the happy reunion of old Abel Vassar and his beautiful daughter. Then, events in rapid and natural succession, led to the clearing up of all the mystery and misery that had surrounded the life of the royal, true-hearted Grace Lanyon and her devoted friends.

Not long after when the Prince Zimene and Shirley Moore returned to the city. Upon receiving word from New York City, Zimene had discarded the use of the drug with his cigarettes, and when Shirley, for the first time in many days of months, stood face to face with his heart's only love, his clouded mind had cleared, and he was the old self once more.

He told a terrible story of his imprisonment by Cardona and his mercenary allies. But all that was past now. He listened with fervor and enthusiasm to the story of all that Grace and her friends had done in his behalf, and was a truly happy and grateful man.

Grace gave to Zimene the memoranda found on Cardona relating to the lost crown and from its description the Prince was enraptured that he could recover it.

He did recover it, in fact, as he wrote to Vassar a few weeks later, and with its finding his friends rallied to his cause, and he was once more king on the throne rightfully his own.

He sent some royally splendid gifts to all his friends, and a particularly precious gift to gentle, waiting Eva—that gift was Basil, her own true love, and her future husband.

Shirley Moore had no difficulty in establishing his claim at Heart's Content, Cardona had exhausted most of the ready cash left by old Richard Moore, but the money Grace had received for assisting Vassar enabled them to put the old mansion in sumptuous shape for a triple wedding.

All Malden had the event with gladsome enthusiasm. Grace and Shirley, Eva and Basil, Rachel and Doctor Dacre—they formed a sextette at whom old Vassar looked with eyes filled with happy, happy tears.

Grace had found a trace of Cardona's wife—the ill-fated Nora Dunn.

The poor girl was disfigured for life. When she attempted for the last time Grace had seen her, the weapon in her hand had exploded in her face.

At the hospital, where she was taken, she met a widower, also the victim of a street accident.

He was quite poor, but had a mortgaged farm and a motherless child, and out West. He was sincerely in love with Nora. She was now a sorrowful, pitiful woman, all her girlish folly had vanished. She was glad to have a home, and she married the man. Grace gave them a sum of money sufficient to start them comfortably in life.

Light and happiness ever after in the old home of Shirley and Grace. The wintry winds, however, are blowing about them now, except to make them think of that dark, stormy night in the old Vassar house, when the snow fell dreadfully—dreadfully.

For now, true love has brought its own reward, and the days, bright and fair, contented, and the white, pure snow falls like brilliant flowers, and typically over happy, happy Heart's Content.

The end.

Items of Interest.

An average of 20,000 orange blossoms about 20,000 oranges, and a lemon tree 8,000 lemons

It is estimated that the divorce industry will yield one million dollars a year to Reno, Nevada.

It is a well-known fact that oxen and sheep live better if a companion (bull) when kept alone.

Dice were invented and extensively used for gambling purposes fifteen hundred years before the Christian era.

Rhode Island's compact has decided that in case of a dispute between the parents the father has a right to name the baby.

The Salvation Army has branches all over the world. It is established in fifty-two countries and colonies, and has divine service in thirty-one languages.

A paintless fire stove has been established in St. Petersburg, where medicines are supplied at about 10 per cent less than in the other pharmacies.

Doctor Jenks of Cornell says that sickness costs the people of the United States a billion dollars a year. No wonder the doctors are visiting the automobile.

Snow at a very low temperature absorbs moisture. Arctic travelers take advantage of this fact by spreading their wet clothes on the snow, and they soon dry.

A Parisian manufacturer advertises "ink suitable for love letters." It is made of a solution of iodide of starch, and characters written with it fade entirely in four weeks.

A fresh outbreak has been discovered of Joseph Stone of Murray Hill, N. J., while he was eating, causing a fit of coughing which lasted several days and in a few minutes he was dead.

The best way to keep a bed from damp, if left for a week or two, is to leave a window open on the side of the bed to be made. Take the blanket off before using and you will then find it dry and sweet.

Mrs. Ella Flagg Young, the superintendent of schools in Chicago, says that "the habit of forcing children to write by the average American child is due largely to a lack of fresh air in the schoolroom."

A professional ball catcher in Pittsburg wagered ten dollars that he could catch any ball thrown to him no matter how curved or swiftly it was sent. The person who bet with him grabbed a ball and, using a young woman before him to pitch. She had never pitched a ball before, but in three pitches she put so many curves to the ball that he has been almost cross-eyed ever since. He failed to be within ten feet of the sphere when it came in his direction.

Comparative Vitality of Sexes.

The comparative vitality of the sexes is of great interest, but especially to life insurance companies. It is generally supposed that men are not only less subject to illness, but are longer lived than women. The actual measure of comparative vitality, however, show that the term of life of women is slightly longer than that of men.

The difference in the mortality rates during the first few years of life is striking. Further on the rate of mortality among males is decidedly greater than among females. Although more boys are born than girls, the proportions are reduced to almost even terms at the end of the first year by the excessive male mortality. Even during the first four years the mortality among males is more than 20 per cent greater, notwithstanding the fact that there are practically no distinctive rules in the management of the two sexes. Both are subject to the same conditions, dressed virtually in the same and receive the same food. At the age of about five years the comparative death rate among sexes begins to change. This has been attributed to the fact that boys at this age are more in the open air. The mortality in both sexes diminishes from this time until the fourteenth year, when it reaches its lowest point. It then increases, being larger in each successive decade than in the preceding one.

Between the twelfth and fifteenth years the death rate among girls increases more rapidly than among boys, but after the sixteenth year, for several years, the rate of increase is more rapid on the male side. The explanations that have been offered for these peculiarities are not wholly satisfactory, but one fact is clear, that during early years females possess a greater tenacity of life than do males.

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Take the treatment fifteen days, according to directions. Should results be such as to make you certain a continuance of Ascol (Lloyd) will cure you, you are to remit us $5.00 for same, and continue the treatment. If after taking treatment for fifteen days, you are not satisfied with results you are to return unused portion of treatment to us and no charge will be made for that which you have used.

Judd G. Lloyd, the eminent scientist who discovered this wonderful preparation, was on December 10, 1908, awarded a diploma of merit by the London Society of Science, Letters and Art of London, England, in recognition of his valuable services to mankind in the discovery of Ascol (Lloyd).

You take absolutely no risk whatever, Ascol (Lloyd) must be entirely satisfactory to you before you pay us one cent. The burden of proof is entirely on us. What Ascol (Lloyd) has done for others it must do for you. Send your name and address today to Ecletural Chemical Co., 571 Lloyd Bldg., St. Louis, Mo.

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The speaker sat down and laughed rather simply.

"Have you got somethin' for a feller to eat, Mrs. Greaves?" he suddenly asked, hitting his milk-and-water glass on the bottom of the house. "I'm awful hungry."

"Yes, you shall have something to eat," quickly spoke Mr. Greaves. While his wife was after the provision Steffer questioned Humpty.

"I didn't know the men," said the boy. "Men," maybe, maybe they was either related to you folks or else Nada'd got married and was keeping it dark. Both bad all."

Humpty began a savage attack on the victuals the moment a loaded plate was proffered him. He talked while he ate, rattling on in a meaningless fashion that was not very satisfactory.

The North Star was a small steamer which made occasional trips up the river, yet was never sufficiently reliable to be received with seriously.

"This is great news if true," declared Greaves.

He stepped aside and consulted with his wife. She seemed to be the information conveyed by the half-witted Humpty.

"It isn't at all reasonable to suppose Nada would go willingly with strangers. I don't believe a word of it. Humpty is only airing his desire to create a sensation."

"But how could he know of Nada's going away?"

"Lots of folks know it now, since you have been all about the neighborhood making inquiries," said the wife.

"That's true. Well, I mean to look into this anyhow."

David Greaves returned to the room where Humpty had been left alone at his dinner. Gordon was talking as husband and wife entered.

"No use trying to fool us, Humpty," the latter was saying. "You know you never saw your sister with two men, nor the steamer North Star. That boat hasn't been in regular for a month. What do you want to frighten us this way for?"

"I'm tellin' the truth, 'spose to die if I ain't," asserted the fisherman's deformed son. "If you won't believe me, ask Luke Fowler."

"Yes, we'd look well asking Luke, jeered skeptical Gordon, "when he lives ten miles away. Why, Luke went to the lumber woods two weeks ago, so that you can't lie."

"Just the same he got off the boat just as the men and Nada came aboard. He saw them, and he'll tell you the same as I do. Nada isn't home, is she?"

David Greaves started to the door as a cheery whistle sounded outside air. A young man of perhaps twenty was passing, leading a lank greyhound by a chain. Gordon started, too, for the passing youth was none other than the supposed far away Luke Fowler. Father and son hastened out to interrupt him, while Mrs. Greaves stood in the open doorway with an anxious expression of countenance.

There, didn't I tell you Luke was here?" chuckled Humpty as his gaze followed the movements of the family.

The Storm Child;

Or, HUNTING THE KIDNAPERS

By J. M. Merrill

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CHAPTER V.
DISTURBING NEWS.

RATHER awkward, foolish looking lad entered the

This was Humpty Dyal, the fishermen's son. Nobody knew the lad by any other from name than Humpty, and he bore it with good humor for one who had often been thought half-witted. He came in with a smile and stood twisting his felt hat through his stubby fingers.

Humpty was, perhaps, as old as Gordon, but scarcely half as tall. His hair was flaxen, his eyes sky-blue, with a buttermilk tint.

"I come to ask where Nada has gone?" said he in a bashful manner.

"What about Nada, Humpty?" quickly asked the settler. "Have you seen her this morning?" was a wild query, yet Greaves was ready with an answer.

"Oh, yes, I saw her, that's why I'm here. Man wants to know when she has ordered them men."

The quick reply drew all eyes upon the half-witted lad. There surely must be something in his story, since no one had suggested that she was.

"I was at the wood landing at daylight cookin' at trains. I saw two men get off and go aboard the North Star and ride away on her. They went to Montegon, and I 'spect she felt pretty good, for she was laughin' at, and talkin' fun at the small man with glasses and beard. Mebbe I'm a queer 'at Nada should go off that way, and so I came over to ask about it."

"Of course," assented Greaves.

"Her guests were friends of yours?"

"Eh—the gents?"

Gordon's eyes twisted his necktie uneasily, glancing sharply at the other.

"The two chaps who were with Miss Nada. Didn't they look like your enough."

"Did you talk with them?"

"Yes, they took me good me off with an ill-natured grunt. Queer acting guys, I thought. Maybe Miss Nada thought them nice, though."

Luke jingled his dog chain louder than ever, and looked very sullen. His sickly smile angered the elder Greaves, who was very much afraid of his son's displeasure.

"They were gentlemen, sir," he said coldly.

"Oh, I wasn't disputing that, sir," quickly uttered Mr. Fowler. His small green eyes twitched with nervous, conciliatory flash. "I could see that Nada thought them about right and hadn't a word to say about their expectability. I reckon they're at Montegon before now, unless the North Star has enjoyed a stress of nautical luck."

"How is that—"

"Run fast on a sandbar," haughingly returned Fowler.

David Greaves frowned in ill-concealed anxiety. He turned to the house with gripped hands and scowling brow as Luke continued his story.

"There's a nigger in the fence, all right," muttered the latter as he and Gordon went along. The sound of a step caused him to halt and turn about.

Gordon Greaves was coming up at a rapid walk. Fowler stood quietly awaiting his approach.

"Say, Luke, you didn't tell all you knew about those men. I reckon you saw sis and sister," uttered Gordon the moment he was near enough to be heard. "You think they weren't of just the right cut; own up to it now."

"Well, that's the truth, Gordy, them chaps was not what I'd expect Miss Nada to patronize. No relatives of hers, I'll be bound."

"No, they were not."

"Seeming friends, though?"

"I don't know a thing about them, Luke." Young Fowler whistled.

"Strangers, eh?"

Although Gordon had cautioned his father not to tell too much to the irresponsible Mr. Fowler, the boy could not rest without knowing all he was to know about the abductors of his sister. While the elder Greaves was consulting with his wife, the boy had rushed after Fowler, with a thousand anxious questions on his tongue.

"Utter strangers, so far as I know," assented Gordon.

"Just so," and a peculiar smile wreathed the lips of Luke Fowler.

"Now, you need not insinuate anything—"

Gordon began an angry protest, but the other only laughed grimly.

"Girls are just girls, Gordy," chuckled Luke. "They can't be trusted nohow. I see through it all. Nada's had a fellow to see her all unbeknown to her parents and her doting brother. It looked to me like a runaway match. Girls are sly, boy, terrible sly."

"Take that, you liar!"

Gordon, thoroughly angered at the insinuations of the other, dealt him a slap across the face, then whirled and ran toward home.

"By George!' young feller, that hurt," muttered the tall youth as he rubbed his cheek where Gordon's hand had struck it. The green eyes flashed angrily, and their owner turned as if to pursue the offender. But he stopped. He thought Nada too blamed nice to even speak to me; now see what a mess she has got them all into by running away with a city guy, who's just as likely a robber as anything. God blast them stuck up Greaves! I'm glad Nada's disgraced 'em!"

CHAPTER VI.
GORDON MEETS GRAYNE.

Tired and almost in despair, Gordon Greaves threw himself upon the sand and gazed out over the ceaseless waves of Lake Michigan, his heart full of bitter memories of the past, and an intense desire to see home and mother once more.

He had been for three weeks searching the country for Nada and her fellow abductee, although more than once some seeming clue had led him from his quest beckon him on to renewed zeal in the search.

There was a whirl of dizzy pain in his head today, and the happy days of the big lake seemed to invite confidence. He was too near the edge of civilized wilderness, however, to think of stripping and plunging into the water. The day had been hot and a bath in the lake would have benefitted him much.

Back to the south some miles, lay the smoke embowered metropolis of Chicago; at his immediate back was the village of Evanston murmured through its veined forests and embowered retreats.

A stranger in a great city, Gordon had managed well for one like him, a country boy, with the exception of one small trouble with a border adventure. The city, however, held for different dangers than any he had which our Clearwater boy had, very soon after settling there, on his search, discovered.

Despite his unsophisticated nature the lad had not committed any grave mistakes. He had read much of the wily ways of city crafts and hidden dangers, and had acted with a degree of caution and reserve that would have done credit to one of more mature years.

His father was on the hunt for Nada in another direction. Somehow, the trail seemed to have vanished from view, and there in a most puzzling manner; in fact, there was made of a confusing picture that it that seemed to defy unraveling. Gordon had not seen his father since they parted at Montegon, two weeks ago. At that time the elder Greaves was debating the idea of employing a skilled detective to find Nada.

His wife had, however, demurred to this, claiming that it would cost more than their

A FRIENDLY GROCER

Dropped a Valuable Hint About Coffee.

"For about eight years," writes a Mich. woman, "I suffered from nervousness—part of the time down in bed with nervous prostration.

"Sometimes I would get numb and it would be almost impossible for me to speak for a spell. At other times I would have severe bilious attacks, and my heart would flutter painfully when I would walk fast, or worry.

"I have taken enough medicine to start a small drug store without even a benefit. One evening our grocer was asking Husband how I was and suggested that I coffee and use Postum, so he brought home a pkg. and I made it according to directions and we were both delighted with it.

"So we quit coffee altogether and used only Postum. I began to get better in a month's time and look like another person, the color came to my cheeks, I began to sleep well, my appetite was good and I commenced to take on flesh and become interested in everything about the home.

"Finally I was able to do all my own work without the least sign of my old trouble. I am so thankful for the little book, 'The Road to Wellville.' It has done me so much good. I haven't the words of any kind for six months and don't need any.

"A friend of ours who did not like Postum as she made it, liked mine, and when she learned to boil it long enough, her's was as good as mine. It's easy if you follow directions." Read the little book, "The Road to Wellville," in pkgs. "There's a Reason."

Ever read the above letter? A new one appears from time to time. They are genuine, true, and full of human interest.

scanty means afforded, besides spreading to the world the fact that their daughter had perhaps eloped with an adventurer. It was this latter thought that deterred Mr. Greaves from at once employing a skilled Vidocq to undertake the case.

And now, after a fruitless search of nearly three weeks, our boy here found himself alone in a great city, not quite moneyless, but almost despairing.

Closely folded in oilcloth was yet a small sum of money, and this Gordon kept closely guarded in his inside vest pocket, which was fastened securely with safety pins.

He would not touch this money till compelled to do so. He had managed to get along by procuring cheap restaurant meals and sleeping in the parks, but if the search did not terminate till chill fall weather set in, he would soon find himself out of funds.

"What's the best word, pard?"

Gordon started and rolled over on the sand at sound of a drawling yet cheery voice, a tall, well-dressed stranger confronted him. The man was young, rather handsome, in a manly, mouth and pleasant eyes. At the present moment he carried a cane and was smoking a cigarette.

"You are taking it easy, I see," continued the newcomer, scattering sand dexterously with the point of his cane. "Tell me here?"

"Here in Evanston? Oh, no, I am from Chicago!" replied Gordon. He then sat up and took notice of the stranger. The immaculate linen and heavy fob guard denoted good taste and seemed to indicate a fair degree of prosperity.

"If you rather prefer, you know, down here by the lake," proceeded the stranger, seating himself beside Gordon, knocking a pebble into the water with his cane. "I enjoy sitting on the sand, watching the ever rolling bosom of the deep. It is so romantic, you know—very."

Gordon eyed the speaker sharply. He seemed very friendly, something that warmed the boy's whole being. He had been longing for company, and now here it was as it came at a bidding of his own thoughts.

"Do you live here?" questioned Gordon in turn.

"Well, no, not exactly," said the stranger with a low laugh. "I'm what is called a cosmopolitan—know what that is?"

"Why, I think I do," said Gordon actually smiled. "You must have a lot of money to go about as you please."

"Dad's rich as a Jew."

"Where does he live?"

"In New York, Denver, San Francisco—and sometimes in London and Paris."

"He's cosmopolitan, too, then. Well, it must be fine to have money to burn like that. And so neither of you have a permanent home. How strange!"

"I don't think so. It would seem strange if I'd settle down in one place and think I'd got to stay there all my life. Think of calling that place home! I'd die of dry rot, surely I would," and the gentleman stranger chuckled at the thought.

He produced a small silver cigar case and offered its contents to Gordon.

"Thank you. I don't smoke," said our boy hero.

"Don't smoke?"

"No."

From an inner pocket the man produced a delicately shaped flask.

"Have a drink, then, on me, pard."

"No thank you."

"Don't drink, either!" with a snort of astonishment. "Say, boy, you must be from the country."

"Yes," with a wildwoods product," informed Gordon laughing.

"Wild and woolly, eh? You're a queer duck. What name?"

"Greaves—Gordon Greaves," informed the boy.

"Eh? Greaves, did you say?"

The stranger had a sudden stung. Then he burst out laughing, at the same time extending his hand.

"Shake, pard, hearty," he cried. "This is good. I like you, my lad, and we are bound to be friends. Why are you in Chicago?"

"On a little business affair," said Gordon, accepting the other's proffer of friendship, not, however, without some misgivings. There was a lot of sincerity in the man's laugh, and Gordon had noticed his sudden start when announced his name.

"Your name is Greaves, and mine is Stayne—Captain Cole Stayne. Ever hear that name, boy?"

"I have seen it in the news from the Philippines," said Gordon. "Your name was with our army fighting the little brown men of the Orient."

"Right you are," assented the lad's new acquaintance. "I saw service there and also in Cuba as well. We gave the Dons a mighty good licking where, in the long ago, Lopez lost his life. I am glad to meet you, my boy."

The two were on friendly terms after that. Gordon had read the name of Captain Stayne in a list of soldiers from a Western State, and remembered that he had been highly commended by his superior officer for some daring deed at the front. The boy was glad to meet so distinguished a gentleman, and wished he had been less disagreeable in his laugh and air of affected superiority. But any event he resolved to try and like the doughty hero of Manilla.

"If I had been older I should have gone to the war," said Gordon.

"Lucky you were young enough to stop home."

"Why do you say that, Captain?"

"Because it was a shameful war—that is, we were in the wrong. The United States men ought to have their freedom. I didn't think so much then as now I know."

"There's a chance for you to be mistaken even now," suggested Gordon, who was a bit surprised at the cynical not the sneering manner of the ex-Captain's speech. "I have always thought we were a enlightened freedom."

"They're our subjects aren't they? Well, why don't the Government of the United States let them go by themselves, which is what they want?"

"I am not so sure of that," returned Gordon. He was in no mood to discuss motives of Government, however, and sprang suddenly to his feet. He had resolved to shake his new acquaintance, whom he did not quite trust.

The Captain sprang up as well.

"Which way, my boy?" he drawled in a sleepy indifference of tone.

"I've got to look out for my dinner—"

"Just my fix, Mr. Greaves," broke in the man. "What say to going with me? I know a blamed fine cafe in the edge of town where one can get a good meal for a few cents. Anyhow, it's my treat and you shall dine on me today."

Locking has arm through that of his new friend Captain Cole Stayne walked away from the shore, aiming toward the center of the town.

Gordon struggled a little, but as his companion held fast, and seemed disposed to be exceedingly friendly, the lad finally consented to accompany him. They took a street car and were soon on their way city-ward.

In the edge of the city the boy and man climbed to the second line and were soon whirling swiftly toward the heart of Chicago.

CHAPTER VII.

A FALSE FRIEND.

Captain Cole Stayne proved himself a most genial companion.

In a downtown restaurant the two sought refreshments. While the meal was passing, the Captain waxed eloquent over an account of his adventures in the Spanish War.

His voice was musical in the extreme, and his friendliness grew apace as he quaffed his wine. Gordon accepted only coffee as his liquid refreshment and the Captain commended him on his temperate principles.

"It's the making of a man," declared the Captain, "for a boy to stand for the principles he has been taught at home. Now, as for me, I was a wild one, and was one of the good things of life and I can't get over it."

"You never overindulge, I am sure," flattered Gordon, soothed and warmed by the friendliness of his companion.

"Not on your life. Never but once did I overstep the bounds of propriety."

"There was a time when you forgot yourself?"

"As we all do, my boy. I think, however, that I was, in a measure, excusable," returned Captain Stayne. "It was immediately after the fall of Santiago. We had a hundred the hangers on Dons, and were feeling pretty good, let me tell you."

"You were in the fighting," suggested Gordon.

"General Shafter held a big jubilee and I've all drank stone-blind. I was drunk for a week."

"Is that so?" ejaculated Gordon in pained dismay.

"Oh, well, it's all in a lifetime, you know," laughingly responded the Captain. "People never should judge others till they are placed in the like circumstances. Maybe it was not a nice thing to do, yet I have never felt ashamed of that little frolic as I could."

"I have been told other of the times they had when news of Lee's surrender reached the army—especially Fighting Joe Johnson was in the Federal army, and he would soon succeed in getting drunk with the fall of Lee the war was at an end."

"Had a big blowout, eh?"

"Yes. Men gathered from all along the Clearwater, and congregated at the inke port at the mouth. Say, Gordon, you're a temperate man, and whole bay was drunk for a week. Now, father, a temperate man, and always has denounced liquor and liquor drinkers, yet he, somehow, couldn't find a word to say in disapproval that time."

"Of course he couldn't. It was once in a lifetime, you know."

"Even deacons of the church were seen to be hilarious, and everybody was happy."

"As were the boys after Santiago," smiled Captain Stayne. "Won't you try this elixir, my boy?"

The speaker poured a limpid draught from a decanter into a delicate goblet and passed it over to his friend.

"What is it?" queried Gordon, who was enthused over the stories.

"Canned cider, my boy. Perfectly harmless, I assure you."

"Nothing but cider, eh? How it sparkles," holding the glass up to the light.

"It's the pure juice of the apple, my boy, and that is the purest drink for good in the fruit line, you know. Since Adam's fall we have advanced and improved apple. From the Garden of Eden down to now the apple has been the King among fruits. Drink to the health, my boy."

The boy raised his glass; his companion did likewise. Gordon drank a long and fine except for a slightly bitter tang at the end.

Captain Stayne shoved back from the little table, which occupied a corner by itself, and rose to his feet. From the main eating-room. It was just the place for a quiet chat the Captain had in mind, and for one reason when they entered the place.

"I'll bet you feel fine now," said the Captain, rising and going over to the side of his guest. "Let me give you one more drink of the tune, my boy? I was host and bugler of our company, and said to beat the instrument you ever heard. Hear me!"

The speaker's voice sounded far away. Gordon felt a strange numbness stealing over his whole body. He tried to rise, but fell back desperately to cry aloud. The air seemed filled with a husky murmur as his words died in a husky murmur on his pallid lips. Good heavens! he realized that he had been poisoned! And there above him grinned the horrid face of the monster Stayne.

"Help!" gasped Gordon, struggling faintly.

"There, now, I wouldn't do that," said Stayne. "You might yell the roof off and nobody would hear you."

The speaker leaned closer and began to go through the pockets of his helpless victim. He found the oilcloth packet, unfolded with all due deliberation. Gordon realized all that was passing, yet was unable to utter even a sound. While his limbs were as clods of earth.

He had been drugged and was being robbed!

Gordon had read of all this wickedness, and had felt that no such fate could ever come to him, even in the great city. Captain Stayne had seemed so friendly, however, that the lad had been wholly deceived.

Now the slippery scoundrel add murder to his other crimes? Such a thought crept into the brain of the half dead boy. He again struggled with his voice.

"Help! Help!"

This time his cry rose loud enough to be heard. Some one opened the door and peered in upon the twain.

It was a kindly face and Gordon felt that help had arrived.

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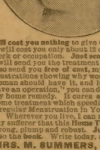

I am a woman.
I know woman's sufferings.
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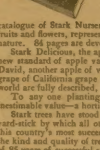

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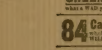

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"What's this yelling about?" demanded the man at the door.

"It's my pal," said the Captain coolly. "He's taken too much booze. Don't call the cop, Jake. I'll tend to him and cool him off in a few minutes, and then I'll take him straight home."

"Well, see't you do."

"No, he is robbing me!" welled to the lips of Gordon, but alas! for his hopes, the cry died as a faint gurgle in his throat, and never formed itself into spoken words.

"I'll look after the boy, Jake," assured the crafty Captain. "He's green where liquor is concerned and has taken a glass too much; he will be better soon."

"Very good, but don't let him yell out again, it don't sound well, you know."

And then the door slammed and trickster and victim were once more alone together. Gordon thought how foolish he had been. Hope died in his heart. He realized but one

"He's taken too much booze!"

distinct thought after that—his body being flashed from the river or lake, an item in the paper mentioning the finding of another floater, that was all!

After that darkness covered everything.

Slowly the boy stirred and opened his eyes.

He had dreamed of wonderful things while lying dumb and apparently dead, under the influence of a potent drug. He sat up at length, starting with a shuddering cry when his hand splashed into a great mass of water.

The cobwebs drifted slowly from Gordon's brain. A chill, damp air penetrated his bones; a faintly rimmed crescent moon dipped low against the distant horizon. It glittered and fanned ghostly figures into prominence across a limitless expanse of water.

Presently Gordon straightened his cramped limbs and sat full upright. Then, for the first time he realized his whereabouts. A wide sea of water surrounded him. He was drifting on the lake in a small and, as he soon realized, leaky boat.

How cold it was out here on the water, although but little past midsummer. He remembered hearing his father say that he once experienced great discomfort on Lake Michigan in a snowstorm on the Fourth of July.

It did not take the boy long to discover that his craft was going slowly, and that if he would keep afloat very long he must bail out the water. Gordon began his task in fear and trembling.

CHAPTER VIII.

GORDON MAKES NEW FRIENDS.

There was a faint stickness at the stomach that troubled Gordon not a little as he baited the water from his boat with doubled hands.

This was, of course, the after effects of the drug Captain Rayne had cunningly administered in the glass of so-called cider. The young Wolverine was wroth with himself to think that he had been so easily duped by a stranger. His father had often cautioned him not to make no friends in a strange city, and he was in a position to prove their sincerity. Had the lad followed this advice he would not now be in a position to bitterly regret his transgression.

The night grew suddenly dark. The rim of the moon dipped behind a cloud, while a sullen boom of distant thunder echoed across the water. A storm was coming and the boy's heart sank.

Alone on Lake Michigan at midnight in a leaky skiff, with a storm fast approaching! His condition was a startling one. And to think that he owed it all to his simple trust of a stranger!

"If I ever get out of this you'll never catch me trusting a stranger again," muttered the now perspiring boy.

The wind rose and swept wildly across the water. Gordon's light craft tossed about like an eggshell. There was no paddle, so that the boy had simply his bare hands with which to guide his craft. He had managed to stop the leak with a bit of frayed rope he had found to the end of the canoe. He tucked and crowded the spongy mass into the seam with his jackknife while the villain, who had so misused him, had forgotten to appropriate.

And now began the fight of his life.

All thoughts of home and Nada were forgotten in the dangers of his position. The storm swept up the south-western heavens with startling rapidity. The flashes of lightning were almost incessant. In fact, it was a beautiful display of fireworks which, at another time, our stunch lumber lad might have admired.

Tonight, however, he was completely mastered by a fear for his personal safety. Courageous as most lads, inured to hardships, Gordon was as helpless to defy outward peril as it were possible for a boy to be. Had not the cruel villain weakened by the drug he had swallowed, he felt more than impotent in the grasp of the elements.

Ah, how the wind howled and blustered!

Many a time, snugly tucked beneath the blankets in his cozy bed, Gordon had felt sorrow, on nights like this, for the poor sailor on the lake. Now, he was to experience in actual contact the dangers of the deep, and, too, at a disadvantage seldom suffered by one of these sailor men he had so sympathized with.

The boy could hold his breath as the big clouds rolled like immense tags of black wool across the sky.

There was many suspenseful moments when poor Gordon crouched helpless in the teeth of the storm. Water splashed his clothes, his hands, his face, and rioted in his masses of curling black hair. How he might have enjoyed the night and storm had the element of danger been left out.

"There's no fun in this at all," groaned the lad with chattering teeth.

He watched the clouds as they were rifted and cut by darting flashes of electricity, guiding as best he could his boat with baling utensil deep in the tempestuous waters. As he crouched there, a damp, draggled, frightened human creature, the clouds parted, a lighter streak shot up the sky, and the horn of the disappearing moon winked a farewell to the edge of the horizon. Gordon breathed hopefully. The storm, so fierce a few hours, had swept away to the northward and once more a calm dropped upon the lately ridged surface of the lake.

Gordon sat up and laughed aloud. He was not to drown after all. The reaction from despair to hope gave the lad new strength. And following this wonderful change in the face of nature came a distant sound to the ears of our suffering boy.

Gordon lifted his head high and listened.

Far across the water came the distant exhaust of a steamer. It was like the glad sound of gurgling water to a famished man in the desert, half dead with thirst. The boy strained every sense to listen.

The sound came nearer each moment.

Soon the fires of a passing steamer lit the heavens. Gordon cried out in a delirium of joy. Help was at hand. The boat drew on, nearer and nearer his position, till he could make out the dark outlines of the steamer at a little distance away.

And now there came to the lips of the boy a great shout for help.

With breathless anxiety the lad in the skiff watched the outcome. To his dismay the steamer passed on without a halt. Again and again he shouted without a recognition. When at length the chug, chug of the engine died in the distance, Gordon Greaves gave himself up to despair. He fell into the bottom of his skiff and cried like a babe in arms.

Such disappointment was worse than being cut off from seeing the circus in his childhood, and that almost broke his baby heart.

The boy lay for a long time sobbing his heart out in the bottom of the boat. At length he lay quiet and seemed to drop to sleep. There was no such kind goddess as sleep, however, to visit the eyes of this long-to-be-remembered night.

While he lay there nursing his woes a strange sound shot across the water—the distant sound of a human voice raised in song!

Gordon sat up, thrilled to the center of his being. He best all his energies into the one act of listening. Again his ears caught the glad sound of human voices raised in singing a rollicking college song. And far to the eastward floated a dark object which he made out to be a boat. In short, a rangy wheeze of a launch engine thrilled his ears.

"Boat ahoy!" screamed the boy at the top of his lungs.

Soon Gordon was gratified to see the prow of the launch head toward his position.

"Ship ahoy! What's the matter?" called a voice.

"It's a fellow afloat without paddle or rudder," called back Gordon, with sudden strength filling his veins at sight of help.

"Why, you're a little whippersnapper," cast upon the billows of the deep. Well rescue him and win the everlasting gratitude of a mother for her daughter's hand in marriage, for our reward."

"Shut up, Jack. How many of us could marry his daughter do you reckon? Heel her! Heel her! That's it. There he is. Now we have it all right."

Gordon was dragged aboard the launch, where he was met with the hearty greetings of three young men, who, it seemed, were out for a lark and had at times been badly scared by the threatening storm.

"Glad to find you aren't an ad. mummy-bags after all," sighed Hal Davis.

"And you can't marry his daughter and win her everlasting gratitude," mocked Jack Kling.

"I think you chaps are making monkeys of yourselves," chimed in slim Gus Ellis, the youngest of the three, and the most sensible, Gordon decided. Each and all were ministering angels, however.

"Where are we now?" asked Gordon when he had told his story.

"Off Grosse Pointe, Chicago," said Jack.

"I have about lost our reckoning, but you see your light-house," said Hal, pointing out water. Gordon saw a faint glimmer of white, shooting toward the heavens.

"Yes," said Gordon, trying to see the northern lights.

"That is the electric halo surrounding dear old Milwaukee," declared Hal Davis.

"We have been out here darkly. We were driven from our course by that breeze at short time since. Wonder you wasn't swamped, Mr. Greeves."

"I should have been had the storm struck with full force," agreed our boy hero. "It was providential that it went whirling up the lake with just a bit of flurry at me with its tail."

"Better be born lucky than rich," chuckled Jack Kling.

Gordon found the three very enjoyable company, being students out for a lark during vacation days.

"We'll land you safely at Milwaukee," said Hal. "You can take pot luck with us till you find a job."

"Thank you," said Gordon, "that is what I may have to do, for my friend, Captain Rayne, didn't leave me a red cent."

"A grand scoundrel," declared Ellis.

"Chicago is full of such critters," clucked Hal. "Now there's our own fine city of Milwaukee, you wouldn't find such a villain there once in a blue moon. All the scamps seem to gravitate toward the 'Windy City' it seems to me."

"No such thing!" jerked out Jack, who, as it happened, was a native Illinoisan. "I know Chicago has a reputation, but it's no worse than other cities of its class."

"Any of the big cities are bad enough," solemnly announced Ellis.

The little boating party reached Milwaukee without further mishap, and Gordon accepted the hospitality of the three chums, who roomed in an uptown flat. They were in the main good, hearty, healthy young men, and our boy was glad enough to meet with such good company.

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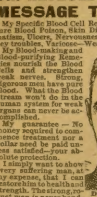

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For the next week Gordon could do nothing but rest and recuperation, since his late strenuous experience had pretty nearly used him up.

CHAPTER IX.

GORDON MEETS LUKE FOWLER.

"Hi, there, young feller!"

Gordon Greaves turned at sound of a voice pronouncing his name. A young man rushed from a nearby shop with extended hand, his face full of smiles, his eyes glistening with pleasure.

"I never thought to see you here in Dutchland!" declared the man.

"Where did you drop from, Luke Fowler?" cried Gordon as he grasped the hand of his old-time acquaintance.

"Right from Shanty Bug, Gordy."

"From home—from Dug Gulch, Luke?"

The speaker's eyes glistened with expectancy.

"Yes, right from the old pine woods, Gordy."

"How are the folks, Luke?"

"All right, I guess. I'm not wondering why he don't hear from you, and Mam Greaves is fretfin' over your long absence," said the young man from the Clearwater. "I was a bit surprised myself to find you here. Where have you been for the last month, Gordy? Nos searching for that girl, I hope?"

"Why do you hope that?"

A resentful feeling entered the heart of Gordon. He remembered how skeptical this fellow had been of his motives and intentions at the time of her abduction, and the lad resented it.

"I hope that for the reason that you are chasing after shadows, Gordy. Why, the old folks have given up hope of ever seeing the girl. They have direct information convincing them that she is now in Europe. Now you—"

"Luke Fowler, close your mouth if you can't talk white," Gordon broke in angrily. "I know that Nada was forcibly stolen, and I shan't rest till I get my hand and returned to her home."

"Oh, is that so?" hair-sneered Fowler.

"Yes, that is so."

"Oh, well, if you feel like that, I have nothing further to say," and the speaker turned on his heel as if to depart.

All of this occurred on the street of the Cream City, early in the morning, where Gordon had disembarked a week after his strange adventure in Chicago. He had thought it best to look that he might get money to continue his search for stolen Nada," he called Gordon. "Don't go off mad, Luke. I would like to hear about things at home."

The countryman turned and faced Gordon with a half-suppressed grin.

"Be civil, then," he grunted. The slap Gordon had once administered to his cheek was not yet forgotten by the man from Dug Gulch, and he had secretly vowed to "get even" with the high-tempered boy for that.

"It is not true that I have given up searching for Nada—"

"Strike you there's more about that than I do, pard," grunted Fowler.

"No, only—"

"Only you think I am a liar, Gordon Greaves. I may be, but it don't look well for a stranger to call a man a liar in his own Honest Injin, though, the folks have given up hope."

"I have not, then."

"It's of you, dad and mam are thinking. They fear something has happened to you, that's what worries them most. You ought to write."

"That is true. I hoped to have encouraging news and so postponed writing. I shall wait no longer; I will write this very day."

He did not tell his country friend that he had not the price of a postage stamp, nor of how he came to be in that strange financial condition. Gordon knew the natural bent of Luke Fowler's mind. He was given to enlarging the smallest incidents into mountains. He would not care to hear from him very any alarming news to his parents. As for returning home without Nada, that was a farthest thing from Gordon's mind.

"That's right, Gordy," agreed Fowler. "It would be a shame to give up short, though, if you would return home."

"I do not think so."

"What are you doing in Milwaukee?"

"Oh, most everything," said the boy noncommittally.

"Not much of anything, I reckon," chuckled the boy from Dug Gulch, "else you'd though, won't you?"

"That depends on how soon I find my sister."

"You haven't gin up looking for her, then?"

"Didn't I tell you I hadn't? I meant to if I didn't. I shall return to the old Dug Gulch without Nada."

A grim smile touched the face of the other. He still held to the belief that the girl had gone of her own free will. In any event the young man did not deeply concern himself about the fate of the pretty storm waif whose strange history had been at one time the talk of the countryside.

The man's smile angered Gordon. His skepticism was nettling to a degree.

"You feel mighty sure I never got the girl, don't you, Gordy?" said Luke Fowler after a momentary silence. "Now, it seems to me, you would kind of like to get her your own folks had got after her. You know, she ain't any kin of yours."

"Yes, I know that, but she is as dear to me as an own sister, even how own parents, if they still live, can have no just claim on her."

"Meaning, no, but they mayn't think as you do. I'll bet a dollar her own kin have got her."

"Why do you think so, Luke?"

"Why, what else would they have?"

"I don't know. It's a puzzle to me."

"Better git out of the city anyhow, pard. You won't be apt to find the girl here. I'm going up into the pines; come along and we'll bunk together in the shanty boys' camp. You like the lumber woods, I know."

Gordon declined to accompany his friend to the woods. It was not there he would find Nada. He still held to the idea that she had been taken to Chicago, and he was anxious to return thither at the earliest possible moment.

"So you won't go with me, then?" said Luke.

"No," returned Gordon, "I should not be contented there with the mystery surrounding Nada unsolved."

"You think she is in this town?"

"No, but she is not far from here. I have seen a man who, I think, is one of her abductors."

"Well, since you are bound to have your own way about this hunt for a runaway girl, I suppose I must go on alone. Let me know when you find her, will you, Gordy?"

With a broad grin on his face, the Dug Gulch settler walked away.

Gordon was that angry at the insinuations of Fowler, that he followed him several yards with the intent to assault him. The boy thought better of this after a moment, and retraced his steps to his rooming place.

He was in the city and still no work.

The prospect was not very alluring. Gordon chafed inwardly, while his face fore a cheerful mien. The new friends were very good to him. They assured him that he was welcome to stay with them as long as he chose to inhabit the city. Of course, Gordon was grateful, yet he disliked the thought of being dependent on others.

He was glad to hear from home, yet not quite pleased that his parents should so easily consent to let the matter of Nada's disappearance rest. It might be that Fowler had not stated facts, yet Gordon thought his father at least would prefer to believe that Nada was in the hands of her own relatives than that she had died with an admirer. Gordon would accept neither horn of a seeming dilemma. He was resolved to remain in the city until he success crowned his efforts if it required months or even years.

"Say, Gordon, good news!"

It was Hal King who came into the rooms late at night and uttered these words.

"What is it?" asked Jack King, who was yawning over a dull book, smoking his pipe like a house afire.

Even steady-going Gus Ellis lifted his dark head and listened to hear. Hal had been to the theater and was the last one in.

"It's news for Nada," said Hal, as he met Uncle So Brunyard this afternoon and he accompanied me to the opera. He was so delighted to hear that I had known from school. Uncle Si is going home in the morning, been in correspondence with fruit crop, and he wants a helper. I thought of you at once, Gordon, and engaged you for the place. You aren't calculated to make one a second Gould, but the place is in one of the finest fruit districts of the U. S. You'll go, of course, my boy?"

"Do you think I can fill the bill, Mr. Davis?" asked Gordon quickly.

Of course you can. The house, delightful country grounds, and a gentle-natured maternal head—good family. I know you'll like them. The Brunyards lived with them three months once."

Gordon had no thought of going into the country, yet this opportunity was too enticing to be lightly passed by.

"What say, Gordon, will you go?" cried happy Hal.

"Yes," returned the boy, rising to his feet with a grateful light in his dark eyes, "yes, Hal, I will go."

Next week's Ledger will contain further chapters of Gordon's strange adventures. You will miss a great treat if you do not read it to the end. We will give constantly the very best stories of entertainment that money will buy, so send in your subscription at once and the Ledger regularly. If you are not doing so. You will not regret it.

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FOR YOUTHFUL EYES

JACK FROST, ROBBER ARTIST.

Old Jack Frost is a robber bold,
He frightens the sun and steals his gold,
He scatters the leaves of autumn trees,
The sunbeams try, but they cannot seize
The gold again for their Father Sun,
So well is Jack Frost's painting done.
He steals from the glowing sunset sky
Hadiant colors to suit his sly die.
He paints the world with such wondrous skill
We do not arrest him. He's stealing still.

Making a Book.

There are many ways to pass a rainy day pleasantly, but Teddy and Rob had found that Aunt Dot was particularly fertile in interesting ideas.

"First," said Aunt Dot one day, as they had gathered themselves before her, a supply sheets of plain brown paper, the scissors, and some thin twine. The boys hastened to obey.

"Next cut the paper into pieces about fifteen inches long and twelve inches wide, and with the scissors make two slashes in each piece, about three-quarters of an inch from the top and six inches apart. Then fold the sheets together and bind by tying the string through the holes, and behold, we have made a book."

This takes longer to do than it does to tell, but after a few minutes they had made a presentable book, and Aunt Dot looked pleased.

"Now," said she, "it will never do to have a book with nothing in it, so we must decide what we wish. Roddy, now would you like pictures of prominent men of the day in yours?"

"Bully," said Teddy, still struggling with the string.

"Very well, then, go down and ask mother for all the magazines 'round the house that she has finished with, and we'll see what we can find."

Teddy returned with an armful, and soon was busy snipping the desired pictures.

"Now, Rob," said Aunt Dot, "what shall we put in your scrapbook?"

"I'd like buildings in mine," replied Rob, "cause you know some day I'm going to be an architect."

"That will be fine," said Aunt Dot, heartily. "Suppose you take every magazine that Ted has finished with and cut out all the big buildings that you think you would like in your book."

The boy cut in silence for a few moments, and soon each had a few little bits of pictures.

"Now for the pasting. One of you run down and ask for the mucilage bottle, or if there is none in the house make a smooth paste of flour and water. Put very little water in at first, and rub the lumps well." So the boys left to do so.

"You must be careful with the pasting part," said Aunt Dot, "and leave a space under each picture to tell who or what it represents. But you can paste them all in and do the writing afterwards."

The pasting was the longest part of all, and the boys were relieved when it was done. Then came writing the names. This was great fun.

"Mine's about wounded Teddy, waving his book aloft. "See, it's a dandy, I tell you."

Rob finished his five minutes later, and then they were taken charge of and shown to mother with much pride.

"While you are picking up the scraps," said their aunt, as the boys came up again, "let me tell you about one honeymoon paraphrase I saw. It was written by a friend of mine, at the beginning of the honeymoon. It was a good thing of interest relating to it he cut from the newspapers and magazines and pasted them in. Of course, as he collected more and more he had to make his larger. But this was very easy, as all he had to do was to turn to the back of the book. A morocco brown paper leaves and tie them on. That was the most interesting book I ever saw, as he followed the war right up to the close, and some day I think it will prove a valuable help to him. There is no reason why you couldn't do the same thing, but whether you will or not, of course, but with any current topic in which you are interested."

Before long the morning is over. See, the sun is shining and you can play the whole afternoon if you like.

It Frightened Him.

There was once a fox who sat by his door all the summertime and smoked pipe after pipe. And his friends often said to him: "Phineas"—his name was Phineas—"why don't you get up and do something instead of sitting there in your doorway and smoking pipe after pipe? Is that highly reputable fashion? Your house is terribly out of repair. There are holes in the wall and patches in the roof, and the chimney is for on all crooked. Now, why," they said it with a capital W, "now Why don't you be a sensible fox and get up and Do something?"

And Phineas when he heard his friends make these same remarks would just smile in an amiable and aggravating manner, and keep on sitting on his doorstep and smoking his pipe after pipe. And he probably would have been sitting there yet if it hadn't been for the chimney of his house, which kept toppling and toppling more and more over until at last it was most bent double—and then the house caught fire. And it burned and it burned with a bright and mighty blaze, and the roof fell in and the walls fell out and it all burned down and it all burned up. And then it was that Phineas ceased to sit on his doorstep and smoke pipe after pipe, because he didn't have any doorstep to sit on, for that was all burned up, too.

At first he tried sitting on the ground where the doorstep had been, but he found the ground so very unresponsive that he soon gave it up. And he gave up smoking, too, because all his tobacco was burned up with the house. Well, Phineas grazed at the ruins of his property and made lots of good resolutions. The first was that in future he'd live in a fireproof stone cave. And the second was that it should have a fireproof stone doorstep. And the third was to buy some more tobacco. And so he set out to find all three of his resolutions. And as he went along the road he kept saying them over and over to himself so that he wouldn't forget them. "Fireproof cave, fireproof doorstep and fireproof tobacco—oh, no, not fireproof tobacco, because I couldn't smoke that—fireproof cave, fireproof doorstep and oddnesproof tobacco."

Well, after he'd said it over some thirty or forty thousand times he began to get a little mixed in his mind, and every time he came to tobacco he had an awful struggle in his mind to think whether it ought to be fireproof or unfireproof. At last he was seized with the brilliant idea of writing down the things he wanted instead of saying them over a hundred and fifty times. But when he wrote them down what did he do but put "fireproof cave, fireproof doorstep and fireproof tobacco."

And so he kept a-traveling round the world and a-traveling round the world, asking everybody where he could find the things on his list, but nobody could tell him, until at last he met a wizard, who answered: "Why, certainly, I can tell you where to get a fireproof cave, a fireproof doorstep and fireproof tobacco."

And then what do you suppose that fox said? He said: "My goodness gracious me, don't tell me," and he ran away as fast as he could. You see, he'd been traveling around the world for so long looking for them things that he'd grown interested in just traveling, and the idea of finding them and stopping nearly frightened him into the middle of next week. And so now he is still traveling but he never knows his list to any one who looks as if he knew the answer.

We are told that the millennium is coming but it isn't coming with a rush. Perhaps a messenger boy is bringing it.

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